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The Small Independent Recording Studio in South Africa

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Research report submitted in partial fulfilment of the degree of Master of Music by Coursework (Performance)

Faculty of Humanities, University of the Witwatersrand
Johannesburg 2007

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ABSTRACT

The small professional independent recording studio (commonly known as a ‘home recording studio’) has arisen in South Africa as it has in other countries over the past fifteen years. It has become an alternative service to that of major recording studios such as EMI and Gallo. My research discusses the history and development of the home studio with relation to technologic and socio-economic expansion in the commercial industry. I use ten established home studios in Johannesburg and its surrounding areas as case studies, working towards a definition of this phenomenon and exploring its influence on the South African music industry as a whole.

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this Research Report is my own unaided work. It is submitted for the degree of Master of Music (Performance) in the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination in any other university.

_____

Ilse-Louise Herholdt-Powell

_____ day of _____ 2007

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to give huge thanks to Prof Lucia, my supervisor and super-visual! Your encouragement and optimism has been my saving grace. Thank you for all your kindness always, your hard work, hours of editing, exceptional input and excellent ideas – you have inspired me to carry on and do better. Without your help, dedication and enthusiasm I would never had the perseverance to complete my studies.

Mom and Sis for reading through 130 pages, fixing my appalling grammar! My family and friends have been a huge support throughout my studies. A big thank you to all of you.

My ten case studies for granting me the opportunity to interview them – thank you for all the extra info, emails and telephone calls. You have been most helpful.

Husband Ronnie being the motivation for the subject of this Research Report. Your curiosity in the indie industry and valuable input as a producer and engineer has been my muse. Thank you for all the coffee, backrubs, junk food dinners and never-ending interest and support in everything I do. I dedicate this research to you.

CONTENTS

Abstract ii

Declaration iii

Acknowledgements iv

Contents v

Glossary of terms viii

List of illustrations xii

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION 1

1.1 PROBLEM STATEMENT 1
1.2 TERMINOLOGY 1
1.3 THE SITE OF MY RESEARCH 2
1.4 AIM AND MOTIVATION 3
1.5 OUTLINE OF THIS RESEARCH REPORT 4

CHAPTER 2: A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE INDEPENDENT RECORDING INDUSTRY 5

2.1. SHORT HISTORY OF RECORDING FROM 1900 5
2.2. SOUTH AFRICA'S RECORDING HISTORY 9
2.3. THE POLITICS OF RECORDING 10
2.4. THE CHANGING STATE OF THE RECORDING INDUSTRY AND THE EMERGENCE OF AN 'INDEPENDENT FACTOR 14
2.4.1. Historical development 14
2.4.2. Sociological factors leading to independence 18
2.4.3. Economic factors leading to independence 19
2.5. DEFINITION OF THE SMALL INDEPENDENT RECORDING STUDIO 21

CHAPTER 3: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND METHODOLOGY 23

3.1. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK 23
3.2. METHODOLOGY 26
3.3. SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONTEXT 27

CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION OF DATA COLLECTED 33

4.1. CRITERIA FOR SELECTING STUDIOS 33
4.2. STUDIOS USED IN THIS STUDY; A DESCRIPION OF PHYSICAL SPACE, EQUIPMENT AND FUNCTION 35
4.2.1. Power Music Entertainment 36
4.2.2. Penmac av 40
4.2.3. Harper Music 44

4.2.4. Stone Music Productions 47
4.2.5. Kulundu Trading 52
4.2.6. MCM 58
4.2.7. Sean Butler Studio 62
4.2.8. Mugu Studio 67
4.2.9. Edwin Randall Music Inc. 72
4.2.10. B-Sharp Studios 75
4.3. SUMMARY 79

CHAPTER 5: TECHNOLOGICAL FUNCTION OF INDEPENDENT RECORDING STUDIOS 81

5.1. TECHNOLOGY AS USE 81
5.2. ANALOGUE AND DIGITAL ENVIRONMENTS 81
5.3. HARDWARE PREFERENCES 82
5.4. SOFTWARE PREFERENCES 83
5.5. USES OF SOFTWARE 84
5.6. TECHNOLOGY AND THE STUDIO ENVIRONMENT 86
5.7. SUMMARY 88

CHAPTER 6: ECONOMIC FUNCTION OF INDEPENDENT RECORDING STUDIOS 89

6.1. THE GROWTH OF ECONOMIC FACTORS 89
6.2. OUTSOURCING 90
6.3. COLLABORATION 91
6.4. INCOME GENERATION 92
6.5. ECONOMIC VIABILITY 94
6.6. SUMMARY 96

CHAPTER 7: 'HOMEWORKING' AND THE SOCIOLOGICAL FUNCTION OF SMALL INDEPENDENT RECORDING STUDIOS 98

7.1. PROFILE OF THE SMALL INDEPENDENT STUDIO PERSONA 98
7.2. SOCIOLOGICAL FUNCTION OF THE SMALL INDEPENDENT RECORDING STUDIO 101
7.2.1. Characteristics of the 'home recording' environment 101
7.2.2. Motivation for establishment of a studio at home 101
7.2.3. Role of the producer 102
7.2.4. Role of other personnel employed 105
7.2.5. Clients 108
7.2.6. Financial advisors, agencies and others 108
7.2.7. Role of the environment 109
7.2.8. Dynamics of working at home 110
7.3. DIFFERENT PRODUCTION ROLES OF THE HOME STUDIO 112
7.3.1. Backing tracks 112
7.3.2. Demos 113
7.3.3. Full CD Productions 113
7.3.4. Music for films and advertisements 114
7.3.5. Other production roles: printing, arranging, mastering, editing 114

7.4. SUMMARY: SMALL INDEPENDENT STUDIOS AS A PHENOMENON 115

CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSION 116

8.1. REVISED DEFINITION OF INDEPENDENT RECORDING STUDIOS 116
8.2. RECOMMENDATIONS 118
8.2.1. Guidelines for aspirant studio owners 118
8.2.2. Issues arising from this research and recommendations 120
8.3. CONCLUSION 121

Appendix 1: Selected list of independent studios in South Africa 123

Appendix 2: List of South African institutions offering sound engineering diplomas and training courses 125

Appendix 3: Selected list of useful websites 126

List of sources 128

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

The definitions and explanations provided below are an indication of how these terms were understood and applied in this research. It is by no means a complete scientific explanation, but can be used as a guide in understanding some of the concepts and terminology relevant to this dissertation.

Analogue: The process of music recording with analogue equipment such as a reel tape that was used before digital recording software and hardware came into play. Traditional audio devices handled sound waves in an analogous form.

Ambience: The acoustic characteristics of a real or imaginary space in which sound occurs.

Arrangement: 'The adaptation of a piece of music for performance by a particular set of voices or instruments' (Burgess 2005, 289).

Audio: Relates to humanly audible sound as well as the broadcasting or reception of sound. It can also entail the process of high-fidelity sound reproduction.

Backtrack: Music that accompanies the artist at a performance, used when the artist does not have access to a live band or orchestra.

Channel: The end-to-end transmission path connecting any two points in which specific equipment is connected. An audio channel is a means for delivering audio signals from one point to another. A MIDI channel allows multiple electronic instruments, performance controllers, computers and other related devices to communicate with each other within a connected network.

Click-track: A 'tick-tock' sound such as that given by a metronome that is used during the recording process in order for band members, artists or percussionists to maintain a constant beat. This sound is usually given through a headset so as not to interfere with the recorded performance. Click tracks are essential when recordings are done by building the song track by track, to maintain the synchronization of every instrument.

Copyright: Copyright grants the songwriter or composer the legal right to be remunerated for the use of their material. Usually the right to receive copyright royalties spans throughout the writer's life and 50 to 70 years after their death. The moneys generated from using a songwriter's material is usually divided between the writer and the publisher, who is in most cases responsible for the gathering of these funds. The three major organizations that are responsible for publishing and copyright in South Africa are SAMRO, SARRAL, and NORM.

Demo: A demonstration CD that gives the client/agent/manager a good idea of the artist's musical capabilities. Although this might be a professional

	product, it is not intended for selling on the commercial market but rather as a demonstration of the artist's capabilities.
Digital:	The recording or manipulating of sound through means of an electric device such as a sequencer or computer. In other words, it is not a manually operated device, but a process that can be manipulated and controlled from a computer. 'Digital recording technology utilizes information encoded using binary code of zeroes and ones – discrete, non-continuous values – to represent the audio information' (Burgess 2005, 291). Digital recording stations are self-contained computer based recording devices utilizing digital technology. In the computer, audio is processed by converting the analogue signal into a digital code using PCM (Pulse Code Modulation – the primary way analogue signals are converted into digital form by taking samples of the waveforms).
Distribution deal:	Used to refer to the contract that is signed between the artist and the record label or major recording studio for the distribution of the artist's product (CD).
Gig:	A performance by a musician or a group for the purpose of background entertainment such as corporate events, birthday parties, weddings etc.
Home studio:	A home studio or independent recording studio (IRS) refers to an active (not less than 2 hours per day) recording studio usually situated on the home premises of the owner. This studio needn't be registered as a business, but if so, is registered as a sole proprietor and not a commercial company. They are not a subsidiary of a major or a minor company, although they may do business with them on a contract basis.
Indie:	An independent, referring in this study usually to an independent record company or label.
Indie record label:	An independent record label operating without the funding of or outside the organization of, a major record label. The boundaries between major and independent labels, and the definitions of each, are somewhat fluid. In practice the traditional definition of a major record label is one that owns its own distribution channel (such as EMI). Some indie record labels, in particular those with successful performing artists, sign dual-release agreements (and make other deals) with major labels and may rely to some extent on international licensing deals, distribution agreements, and other arrangements with major record labels. Major labels may also wholly or partially acquire independent labels.
Major:	'One of the big four global record companies (Sony/BMG, EMI, Universal, Columbia) which, combined, command over 75% of the international market share' (Burgess 2005, 294). I see Warner Music and Virgin Records also as major companies.
Major record	A record label managed by a major record company such as Universal,

label: EMI, BMG or Warner.

Marketing: 'The process of identifying and reaching specific segments of the population for the purposes of selling the music to them. This includes setting prices, giving discounts, placing product in appropriate physical and online retain outlets; getting airplay, TV exposure, tour coverage; the creation of point of sale display materials, paid-for media advertising, free media coverage via interviews, reviews and features product endorsements, direct marketing to consumers via mail and email, online marketing via websites, newsgroups and blogs (Burgess 2005, 295).

Mastering: Once the product is recorded and mixed, it goes through the process of mastering which gives it the final professional sound. This process is often not required if the product is used for demo purposes, but in the case of a product being released into the market, mastering is required. Mastering is a very difficult process in which the sound is condensed or compressed (top and bottom frequencies diminished) in order for the music to sound the same irrespective of where and on what system it is played. It also brings all the songs on the CD to more or less the same volume so that there are no discrepancies between songs. It also brings volume up to the loudest level on the product without distorting. Often mastering is done by a specialist outside the recording studio, as it is considered an art and is very time consuming.

MIDI: MIDI is the abbreviation for the term Musical Instrumental Digital Interface which is the standard specification that enables electronic instruments such as a synthesizer, sampler, sequencer, sound modules and drum machine from any manufacturer to communicate with one another and with computers. In plain speech: a digital language for electronic recording devices (Selfridge-Field [ed], 1997).

Minor: A minor refers to an independent record company which is registered as a commercial company, and not part of the big four. An independent recording studio (IRS) if registered, functions (and is registered) as a sole proprietor. In other words a minor is an (commercially registered) independent record company (IRC) and not an independent recording studio (IRS) or home studio as in the case studies discussed in this research.

Mixing: Mixing is the process where different levels between various instruments are established, and also where effects processing such as reverb are added to enhance the recording. This is a major part of the sound engineer's work, and requires a very good ear and technical skill. In the mix mistakes by artists can also be rectified.

Music publishing: 'Music publishing is the business of acquiring and exploiting rights in musical compositions. It is a business based on the songs themselves as distinct from the records, films, commercials or other media in which they are used. Publishers are custodians of the song, *i.e.* the words and the

music, and their business is to assure that they are heard and enjoyed' (Steyn 2005, 35).

Record: *Roget's Thesaurus* lists the following for the notion of record as 'capture': 'Record, tape record, telerecord, tape, videotape, video; store in a database, input, burn;
Recording, documentation; historical record, memoir, chronicle, annals, history, official report;
Recording instrument, recorder, tape recorder, video tape recorder, VTR, videocassette recorder, VCR, video recorder, video disc, digital video disc, digital versatile disc, DVD; record, disc , laser disc, etc. Music player; dictaphone, teleprinter, tape machine' (Davidson 2004, 224).

Record deal: The contract signed between an artist and a record label or major recording studio for the recording of the artist. The contract can extend over a period of time (usually two years) or the length of association with the record company can be determined by the amount of albums stipulated in the contract.

Record label: In the music industry, a record label is a brand and a trademark associated with the marketing of music recordings and music videos. In everyday usage, a record label is also a company that manages such brands and trademarks; coordinates the production, manufacture, distribution, promotion, and enforcement of copyright protection of sound recordings and music videos; conducts A&R; and maintains contracts with recording artists and their managers. It may in addition be small, localized, and 'independent', or it may be part of a large international media group, or somewhere in between. Generally, recorded music needs a record label in order to be widely known ('published'), reviewed, heard on media outlets such as radio or television, and in order to be available in stores, although buying through the Internet has changed this notion to some extent (Gordon 2000, 63).

Recording studio: The place where sound is recorded: this can be any kind of space, from a top-of-the-range luxury recording suite to a garage or living room. Usually the space consists of a control room with computers and sound processors as well as a recording or isolation booth with an acoustically treated environment.

Post-production: It is the general term for all stages of production occurring after the actual recording and ending with the completed work such as a CD, film, advertising etc. Post-production is in fact many different processes grouped under one name. These procedures typically involve editing and adding special effects. In the case of audio production it can also include mastering, printing or pressing of CD and even packaging.

Pre-production The work, equipment and environment preparation that goes into a product before it actually gets to recording. This involves anything from rehearsals to arranging songs and laying down MIDI or click tracks. Often

it involves the producer re-arranging lyrics, changing chords or structures of a song in order to get the most out of it.

Producer: The person responsible for the whole recording process, or rather the producing of a *product*. The responsibilities of the producer have changed through the past decades, and now can include anything from letting the production happen, to giving creative input, changing cables, sound engineering, mixing, mastering, and in the case of independent home studios even performing on the production.

Production: The process of actually recording the product (such as a demo or CD), whether it is a live performance of the band or done individually. Every instrument and/or voice gets recorded separately on a track, one by one. From there the product gets mixed before the final stage of mastering and printing.

Production room: The main room of a studio where the producer performs the various functions of the studio, usually behind a desk with a computer, often looking through a double-sided window into the sound booth.

Sound booth: (sound room) An enclosed area, often the size of a room, which is sound proofed. Also referred to as sound room, sound proof room, recording room, or even a vocal booth or drum booth.

Tracks: The channel or lane (as on the road) that an instrument is recorded onto the computer. The advantage of recording each voice or instrument on a separate track is that the sounds can later be manipulated or mixed to create a better overall effect with the rest of the instrumentation.
An audio track lets you store audio data as sound values rather than a musical symbols. An audio track works like a recording tape that you can include in a musical document and on which you can record whatever you want for subsequent playback. A MIDI track lets you store a MIDI file or MIDI data as musical symbols. This MIDI track can be routed through a synthesizer slot (or track output channel) using a software synthesizer, which can be converted to audio through the mixer. If it contains a MIDI port, the output will be sent to an external hardware synthesizer.

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Fig 1 Map of Johannesburg and surrounding area with reference to studio locations
Fig 2 PME: Main production room showing pre- and post-production work stations
Fig 3 PME: Main production room showing pre-production and administration work stations
Fig 4 PME: Sound booth
Fig 5 PME: Kitchen/bathroom
Fig 6 Penmac av: Audio production room desk
Fig 7 Penmac av: Mixing desk and sound booth window
Fig 8 Penmac av: Audio visual production room view 1
Fig 9 Penmac av: Audio visual production room view 2
Fig 10 Penmac av: Sound booth
Fig 11 Harper Music: Production area view 1
Fig 12 Harper Music: Production area view 2
Fig 13 Harper Music: View from production desk to space that will become sound booth
Fig 14 Stone Music: Entrance hall leading to production room
Fig 15 Stone Music: Production room with window facing sound booth
Fig 16 Stone Music: View of production room from sound booth
Fig 17 Stone Music: Sound room
Fig 18 Kulundu Trading: Studio view from garden
Fig 19 Kulundu Trading: Area before building extensions to accommodate office and studio
Fig 20 Kulundu Trading: Production room view 1
Fig 21 Kulundu Trading: Production room view 2
Fig 22 Kulundu Trading: Sound room
Fig 23 Kulundu Trading: Sound room view towards production room
Fig 24 Kulundu Trading: Office view 1
Fig 25 Kulundu Trading: Office view 2
Fig 26 MCM: Production room 1
Fig 27 MCM: Production room 2
Fig 28 MCM: Manufacturing room with view of screening machine
Fig 29 MCM: View of audio visual room
Fig 30 Sean Butler Studio: Production room
Fig 31 Sean Butler Studio: Close up of keyboards
Fig 32 Sean Butler Studio: Production room desk
Fig 33 Sean Butler Studio: View from production room into sound booth
Fig 34 Sean Butler Studio: View from production room leading into entrance hall
Fig 35 Sean Butler Studio: Sound booth
Fig 36 Sean Butler Studio: Sound booth as seen from window with Sean Butler
Fig 37 Mugu Studio: Production room
Fig 38 Mugu Studio: View of production room’s mixing desk
Fig 39 Mugu Studio: Sound booth 1
Fig 40 Mugu Studio: Sound booth 1 with view of sound booth
Fig 41 Mugu Studio: Sound booth 2 with view of grand piano
Fig 42 Mugu Studio: Sound booth 3/kitchen
Fig 43 Randall Music Inc: Production room viewed from kitchen
Fig 44 Randall Music Inc: Production room viewed from lounge
Fig 45 Randall Music Inc: Production room midi controller
Fig 46 Randall Music Inc: View of lounge with grand piano

Fig 47 B-Sharp Studio: Production room with window to sound room
Fig 48 B-Sharp Studio: Production room view 2
Fig 49 B-Sharp Studio: Sound room with platform for drum-kit
Fig 50 B-Sharp Studio: Sound room view 2
Fig 51 B-Sharp Studio: Sound room with JP in doorway

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1. Problem statement

My main interest in researching the small professional independent recording studios of South Africa is a personal one. I completed my own studio at home in Germiston three years ago in order to capture my performances in a relaxed, comfortable environment. Popular demand quickly forced me to upgrade my studio, 'Power Music Entertainment', to a more professional level, and more and more artists came to ask for the opportunity to record and arrange music. It seemed that I had found a golden opportunity: most of my clients (unknown artists) neither had the financial means to record in a large 'professional' studio, nor possessed the skills or resources to start their own studio. Moreover, it seemed to me that recording in the environment that I had created at home contributed to the quality of artists' performance and recording.

Independent recording studios are concerned more with process, with nurturing and capturing a really good performance, than with creating a mass-produced market-oriented product. I knew that there were other studios like my own but did not know how many. I therefore decided to research this micro-phenomenon of the music industry, especially as it relates to the Johannesburg area where the macro recording industry in South Africa is situated.

1.2. Terminology

The term 'independent recording studio' (IRS) will be referred to in this Research Report as the general term when referring to this phenomenon, sometimes alternating with the term 'home studio' (abbreviated as HS) especially where it relates more specifically to the home based environment, or 'indie' as it is known colloquially in the industry. I am aware that the term Home Studio 'conjures up images of ancient sheds filled with shortwave, ham radio equipment…. the domain of the solitary techhead, the mid-twentieth century predecessor of the geek'(Burgess 2005, 32). But I also agree with Burgess's sentiments that the contemporary phenomenon is more hi-tech, and that 'geekdom is cool … a sort of DIY engineer/musician route' (Ibid).

1.3. The site of my research

The small professional independent recording studio has arisen in South Africa just as it has in other countries, over the past fifteen years. It has come to offer an alternative service to that given by large commercial studios run by recording companies or the media, such as EMI or the SABC. Everyone knows of someone that has geared him/herself up with software, a PC, and a kind of a sound booth, maybe in his/her garage or in their lounge and is making recordings for themselves or others or just having fun recording their garage band. In South Africa what motivates these 'indies' seems to be partly economic – musicians want to have an independent product with which to market themselves, and partly psychological – they just want to have something that they have done all by themselves for family and friends, or clients who prefer to pay less for their product or who want to own and distribute it independently. Hence the people who own these studios call themselves 'producers'.

In this research, however, I have chosen to focus not so much on the proliferation of new entry-level studios, but on slightly more established and more economically viable home studios that have acquired somewhat of a reputation in Gauteng. Defining an IRS or HS is part of the problem, too, and I move towards a working definition in Chapter 2 that I revisit at the end of this Research Report once my data has been presented and interpreted.

Independent studios like mine make backing tracks ('backtracks') as well as recordings, among their other functions. They provide a more economical way of performing music where the solo artist does not have to rely on a live band or orchestra. The artist can also re-use backtracks without the additional expense of royalties, and this makes a performance ('gig') more economically viable. Small studios can also offer composing and arranging advice to their clients. The changes brought about these apparently small factors contribute not only to the IRS scene itself, but also to a new economical and social change in the music and recording industry of South Africa as a whole.

1.4. Aim and motivation

This is one of the main aims of my research: to explore this phenomena at ground level and speculate on its impact on the recording industry as a whole; to prove that 'indies' have established themselves as a viable and valuable aspect of the South African music industry. I show how small independent studios emerged and developed – in many cases into competition with the larger established commercial recording studios, how they filled a gap in the market; and how they enabled greater independence among performers and composers, subsequently providing a new definition of 'the small recording studio'.

Part of the aim also includes showing how technological developments made this possible and providing a perspective on the scope of the development. The influence of home recording and producing has been huge in terms of the impact on musicians' economies as well as on the South African music industry as a whole, and I aim to provide a description of this interaction. Finally, I will show that the independent studio is not a uniform or static phenomenon, but each studio's function and design is unique and is always in a state of flux, moving constantly towards a level of greater specialisation or multi-functionality.

The development and scope of the small independent recording industry in South Africa is a field of research that has not been explored. The literature available on this topic, although fairly large, is limited to either the international IRS or on a specific topic relating to music technology. Literature pertaining specifically to South Africa and the IRS proved to be far and few between, and failed to provide relevant references. Therefore describing this phenomenon and subsequently determining the size of the IRS would be quite impossible, since this industry is rapidly increasing. (In Appendix 1 I provide a list of independent studios that were registered; the number of unregistered studios I estimate to be in the thousands). Even the term 'small independent recording studio' (or 'home studio', or 'amateur recording studio') has not been clearly defined in this country despite the phenomenon being present for many years. By the same token, there 'is no single, internationally recognized definition of "homeworking"', as Felstead & Jewson have pointed out (2000, 14). 'Even within a single country definitions can differ widely. While many studies have

gone to considerable lengths to specify who is – and who is not – included, few have offered theoretical justifications for their choices' (Ibid).

A number of internet sites are nevertheless dedicated to the IRS and it is regarded as a worldwide phenomenon. Part of my motivation is to define this term more precisely, to show how widespread and important it is in the context of the South African music industry (especially in the Gauteng area), to reveal different facets and functions of the independent studio, and to provide advice to prospective studio owners (see Chapter 8). I believe that the impact of the independent recording industry of South Africa is so great that this phenomenon deserves to be explored and recognized as a new innovative industry with an important impact on music and musicians in South Africa.

1.5. Outline of this research report

To give background and context to this research I begin with a brief account of recording from 1900 to the technological age in Chapter 2, relating it to South Africa's own history, and tracing the emerging autonomy of the independent recording industry. A preliminary definition of the independent recording studio concludes Chapter 2, which is revisited in Chapter 8. The theoretical framework and research methodology are explained in Chapter 3, followed by the presentation of data collected through case studies in Chapter 4. Chapters 5, 6, and 7 will explore the data in terms of the technological, economic and sociological functions of the IRS respectively. Chapter 7 also includes a discussion of the psychological profiles of producers, commercial musicians, and other workers, and concludes with a discussion on the different production roles of the home studio.

In the final chapter (Chapter 8) I revise the definition of the independent recording studio as well as the place and purpose of the home studio in the market. Some recommendations, including guidelines for prospective studio owners, are followed by a final conclusion. The Appendices contain a list of independent recording studios and institutions with training courses, and a list of websites dedicated to this topic.

CHAPTER 2: A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE INDEPENDENT RECORDING INDUSTRY

Recording as defined according to a process whereby a live musical event becomes a fixed physical product that reproduces that event, has more than a century of history behind it. The history of sound recording is primarily 'one of technical advances leading to changes in the nature of the process' as Roy Shuker puts it,[1] and alongside this 'the tasks and status of the associated labour forms' have constantly changed (2002, 281). Improvement in technologies, as Shuker sees it, have also 'opened up new creative possibilities, and underpinned the emergence of new genres, notably techno and various other styles of contemporary dance-music', thus enabling and sustaining new and varied musical aesthetics (Ibid).

2.1. Short history of recording from 1900

As early as the 1870s the technology was developing that could enable man to develop a means to capture performances of music. Technology impacted on aesthetics, and vice versa – a mutual dependency that has continued until today. Abstract scores no longer had absolute charm, live performance was soon forgotten and people had the need to prolong the beauty of a performance of an artist. As Evan Eisenberg points out, however, the early development was slow. Although already in 1877 music 'began to become a thing', the process of reification took several more decades,

> because the early phonograph allowed only a thumbnail impression of timbre and because Edison, who was partly deaf, turned his device to nonmusical and painfully unmusical uses. He meant it mainly for the business and family voice-recording chores that cassettes now handle, and when the public demanded music he gave them vaudeville ditties. In America the critical moment, the moment at which one might pinpoint the reification of music, was 1906 (1987, 13).

1906 was the year of the Victrola, the first phonograph designed by the Victor Company. It came in a 'piano-finished' mahogany, selling at the (then) whopping price

[1] Among the extensive literature related to this topic, including websites, there are some sources that stand out, such as Shuker's *Popular music: The key concepts* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002). I draw extensively on this source but far from exclusively; it does however warrant being recommended to prospective independent studio owners as a key text to understanding the context in which they work.

of $200. The one-sided records required for listening entertainment were a costly $7, the same price as a full suit of clothes. Edison worked closely with Alexander Graham Bell and Thomas A. Watson prior to the release of his 'talking machine', and his initial cylinders were upgraded by Berliner in an 1888 gramophone that used a disc instead of a cylinder. This was the forefather of the home stereo as we know it today (Ibid, 14).

The word 'record', or 'recording', originally referred to the process that captured sound as an event, just as other historical events were captured – for posterity, and just 'for the record'. However, it soon came to mean something additional, something fabricated, since, as Eisenberg says: '[o]nly live recordings record an event; studio recordings, which are the great majority, record… an ideal event. They are like the composite photograph of a minotaur … The use we put [recording to] now might strike [Edison] as fraudulent, like doctoring the records' (Ibid, 89).

An issue for this research, then, is what 'live recording' means as opposed to studio recording. Whilst live recording is the recording of a live event, it is not always considered the exact replication of a live event. It might be reserved only 'for those situations where the audience is in physical proximity to the performance, and the experience of the music is contiguous with its actual performance' (Shuker 2002, 218). However, many more listeners experience such a performance afterwards, 'at a distance from its actual physical and temporal location' once it has been 'captured and represented via music video, film, radio and recordings'. Thus the meaning of live recordings can be 'regarded as rather ambivalent, given that many are technologically sonically upgraded to their release' (Ibid). It is with both recording as capturing, and recording as inclusive of a process of upgrading or production (or as Edison might call it, doctoring), that small independent studios are concerned.

The popularization and wider availability of recorded music over live music rapidly reached many corners of the world where even live performances were rare. For example, the summer before 1910 a moody young Sergei Prokofiev wrote a letter to his girlfriend Verochka complaining about the way 'civilization' had penetrated Russia. 'One of the peasants has bought himself a gramophone. And now every evening this invention of the devil is placed outside his hut, and begins to gurgle its horrible songs' (quoted in Eisenberg 1987, 57). Nevertheless, many artists recorded, and classical, jazz,

popular and folk music were captured by ‘this invention of the devil’. But could the new phenomenon of capturing sound become an enduring industry? That it could, and did, is captured in *The Gramophone* magazine’s announcement in June 1954 that their circulation had reached 50 000 copies monthly. The editor of the magazine speculated that the reasons for the increase since World War II were related to ‘the redistribution of purchasing power brought by the Welfare State’ and with it the enshrining of a new principle that the arts, like ‘education, health and social security, were universal goods which ought to be generally available regardless of the ability to pay’ (Day 2000, 102). Thus ‘twenty times as many music-lovers were now able to collect records as when the magazine began publication in 1923’ (Ibid).

Besides the influence on the market due to the new availability of records, the recording industry, according to Colin Symes, also gradually changed global music culture, transcending listeners beyond the barriers of time and space: ‘examples of virtually every domain of music from every phase of its history have now been recorded, and most households own a collection of records …This has enabled individuals to privatize their musical experiences and circumvent the need to participate’ in music making (2004, 248). Symes believes that music culture has been ‘decentred’ allowed to transcend time and space and ‘be placed in a state of suspended animation that can be unsuspended at will’; and also disembodied, taken ‘out of the hands of its performers’. The whole process, he argues, ‘has transformed the entire political economy of music’s production and consumption’ (Ibid).

Symes is echoing here Adorno’s reference to ‘decentred music culture’ or mass culture. Adorno’s main critique of the culture industry was precisely that it disempowered rather than empowered the masses. He saw it not as something that ‘arises spontaneously from the masses themselves’ – from below – but something that ‘fuses the old and familiar into a new quality … intentionally integrat[ing] its consumers from above’ (2006a, 98).

As the culture industry evolved, so did the technology of the product, evolving by the end of the twentieth century ‘to the almost indestructible medium of the CD, which can hold eighty minutes of music and is small and light enough to be accommodated on one’s person [among other] wireless artefacts that individuals have begun to

"surround" themselves with and mount on their clothing' (Symes 2004, 248). The fetish surrounding personal technology was true also of technology in the home. 'Listening to music became increasingly … akin to a religious exercise, the opportunity for a mystical experience, a matter of intense concentration and attention both to the structure, to the unfolding of the music's argument, and to the inner meanings of the sounds themselves' (Day 2000, 205). 'Even those music-lovers who frequently attended concerts and opera productions in 1998 usually listened to much more music through recordings than they experienced in live performances' (Ibid, 199).

Listeners' expectations of the concert hall changed accordingly, Eisenberg argues, and as listening or concentration was frequently marred by the behaviour of other listeners or by another's choice of programming, so listening at home became more attractive.

> Now the *Symphony of a Thousand* could play to an audience of one. Now a man could hear nocturnes at breakfast, vespers at noon and the Easter Oratorio on Chanukah. He could do his morning crossword to the 'One O' Clock Jump' and make love right through the *St Matthew Passion* … It was the freedom, once the cathedral of culture had been wrecked, to take home the bits you liked and arrange them as you pleased. Once again a mechanical invention had met capitalism's need to recreate all of life in its image. The cathedral of culture was now a supermarket (Eisenberg 1987, 24).

Playing with the technology in your own home became part of the pleasure, and became one of the first ways in which technology infiltrated the home space, several decades before the invention of the personal computer. *The Times* (London) carried an article in August 1987 with the centenary of Edison's invention, about the seduction of the home entertainment system:

> There is something intrinsically pleasurable about the whole process of selecting, buying and playing a record. Indeed the dedicated hi-fi enthusiast probably derives as much pleasure from browsing through his collection, extracting the record from its sleeve, carefully cleaning the surfaces, and adjusting the controls of his hi-fi, as from listening to the music (quoted in Eisenberg 1987, 27).

As listening to music became increasingly fetishized, so creating music or performing music oneself came to seem a painstaking and even unnecessary experience. 'Why then do musicians record?' asks Day, and his answer begins to echo the motivation for the work that is done in many small independent music studios. 'For posterity. For my own satisfaction. For the world. Because everyone does' (2000, 57).

An early celebrated case of someone for whom recording as a performer was not necessarily what everyone did but was for him the ultimate in perfection, was Glen Gould. He stopped performing live and focused on recording in the sanctity of the recording studio, away from the distraction of an audience. Gould's experience – remaining a highly individualistic artist while at the same time working within 'the culture industry' – makes an interesting case in relation to Adorno's critique: Gould became the advocate, in some ways, of a new form of expression that supported commercialization but used it in a new way. 'Gould was right to believe that the centre of musical gravity was now the spindle hole. He was right to insist that recorded music be viewed not as a reproduction of the concert but as an independent art, as distinct from live music as film is distinct from theatre' (Eisenberg 1987, 85).

2.2. South Africa's recording history

In South Africa the impact of the history of recording has been felt in ways relating specifically to its own political and social history. Veit Erlmann explains that the beginning stages of popular music history in Africa were the product of integration with the world economic and political order in the late 19th and early twentieth century. 'This wider process and its concomitant social transformations – urbanization, industrialization, colonization – were instigated by a number of social agents whose interaction resulted in the social, political, and cultural metamorphoses that affected all African societies profoundly' (1991, 176). The first commercial recordings of South African popular music began around 1912, but only flourished after 1939 when Eric Gallo's Brunswick Gramophone House sent several South African musicians to London to record for Singer Records. Gallo Record Company remains the largest and most successful label in South Africa to date, recording music since 1933.

Erlmann further suggests that the British and African military corps had a very powerful influence on emerging popular performance genres throughout Africa. The military brought young Africans in touch with Western instruments such as brass instruments and military drums. Africans were exposed (especially in the First World War) to several Western performance traditions, especially from America. American pop culture had forever left its mark on South African (and also other African

countries') music. Moreover, in the popular music field South Africa was ahead of its time in comparison to most other African countries, because of its recording industry. Musicians had already found ways in the early 1920s to perform outside the barriers of traditional music as part of a fast growing large-scale recording industry that 'in other African countries did not set in before the end of the Second World War' (Ibid).

Although some African countries were ahead of their time with popular music recording, the early traditional recordings of African music were few and far between until the advent of the Hugh Tracey recordings *Sound of Africa* and *The Music of Africa* from the 1940s onwards (see Agawu 2003, 34). One has to keep in mind that these recordings were more often than not recorded in the field, rarely in a professional studio. As time progressed and traditional musicians became more aware of the modern technique of capturing their performances, however, they started searching for the right recording studio at the right price. Thus one could also say that the early fieldwork of ethnomusicologist contributed in paving the way for the emergence of the independent recording studio.

Ronnie Graham describes the rise of South African music's popularity, which undoubtedly had a huge impact on the establishment of record labels and the rise of the IRS. 'During the 1980s African music increased steadily in popularity, establishing a permanent niche in the international scene. And it would be no exaggeration to suggest that contemporary South African music played a central role in this process' (Graham 1992, 187).

The manufacturing of records will always be an undeniably important part of the record industry, whether by a major or independent recording studio. But although a record is a 'time capsule' and a phonograph a 'time machine', as Eisenberg puts it,

> they are so in an unaccustomed sense. A record is a sculpted block of time, repeatable at the owner's whim. That block may have been carved from another time and place (through only live recordings are carved in one piece) and so may be a document or record of its quarry. But a record of music does not record historical time. It records musical time which, though it exists in historical time, is not of it' (1987, 37).

The history of recording had a phenomenal impact on music, musicians, music lovers and pop culture internationally as well as locally. South Africa's political history also contributed to the state of the IRS as we know it today.

2.3. The politics of recording

South Africa's political past had a great impact on the popular music of South Africa, which in turn has always had a close relationship to the recording industry. Popular music has almost always been racialised. Indeed, '[i]n a country such as South Africa where racial and class barriers in part coincide, it may be tempting to consider black and popular as interchangeable notions for the new forms of musical expression that arose [in the early twentieth century] through and in response to colonial conquest, capitalist penetration and racial domination' (Erlmann 1991, 19). But the boundaries have constantly shifted, as Erlmann notes, 'between black and white culture, between popular and elite, hegemonic culture' (Ibid) even though the recording industry until the 1990s was continually controlled by white-dominated recording and production companies, no matter what kind of music was recorded.

In the political environment since 1945, 'the growth of black resistance to political and cultural domination intertwined and gave rise to distinct, socially differentiated popular styles in the 1950s and 1960s' (Ibid 179). The use of recorded 'popular' and 'rural' music became deeply entwined, both serving the needs of the apartheid state. Early recordings of traditional Zulu music for example were used to promote notions of rural harmony and thus 'to discourage permanent urban residence as viable lifelong alternatives' (Ibid, 74).

Although the history of recording in South Africa does include a number of genres, such as choral music, opera, symphonic, piano, chamber and vocal music, it is popular music that has dominated the (popular) consciousness, and the recording industry. Popular music often had a role in creating social change. Many countries, too, and South Africa is no exception, have seen state power used to effect direct intervention in the cultural sphere, through censorship and the regulation of broadcasting (Shuker 2002, 223). Popular music has countered by 'translat[ing] political radicalism into a

more accessible idiom, identifying social problems, alienation and oppression, and facilitating the sharing of a collective vision' (Ibid).

Although post-apartheid South Africa with its rainbow nation now has a more colourful appearance to the outside world, recognition in the black popular music field was difficult during apartheid – black music was often 'traditional', not popular, and the composers of this music didn't get the recognition they might have enjoyed as white composers of popular music.

> From the very outset in the 1920's and 1930's, the South Africa recording has used the concept of traditional music to legally inscribe the industry category 'trad' as a compositional credit on African recordings. Until 1964, the 'trad' label kept African compositions in the public domain, made the composers anonymous, and obviated royalties or copyright protection. For the next 25 years, apartheid helped keep these ideas and practices in place despite ameliorative legal remedies, and new institutions such as the SA Music Rights Organisation (SAMRO) and the SA Recording Rights Association Ltd (SARREL) (Erlmann 1991, 112).

Apart from the failure of recognition of composers marked with the 'trad' label, popular songwriters and composers also failed to find record companies to record their music, as it wasn't regarded as original but traditional. However, record companies, although perhaps still too dominated by the effect of apartheid, can't take all the blame for the lack of recognition and royalties for black players, since the '[m]ore industry-wise urban black popular musicians [themselves] often re-arrange[d] and record [ed] the compositions of *maskanda* composers, whom they regard as amateur rural folk artists, without credit or payment' (Coplan 1985, 112).

African music traditions have continued nonetheless, seeing the emergence of various urban styles such as maskanda, isugubu, mbaqanga and isicathamiya. Indeed some artists in these styles have begun to incorporate other African music into their music, such as 'veterans Sipho Mabuse and Brenda Fassie, and township youth icons Bongo Maffin [who] have attempted tentative but successful collaborations with performers of *kwasa-kwasa*, as the neighbouring south-central African musical styles are called (Ibid 111). And over time, though the record companies have recognized that they can generate economic benefit from 'backing up the individual song-smiths and guitarists with ensemble players, creating traditional bands if you will, and later when urban concerts became established cultural events, with dancers' (Ibid 108).

However, according to Shuker, political economy analysis tends to devalue the significance of culture, seeing it primarily as the reflection of the economic base.

> The influence of classical political economy is evident in the arguments of contemporary Marxists who emphasize the power of the corporate capitalist music industry to manipulate and even construct markets and audiences. More than any of the other performing arts, the world of song is dominated by the money men on the one hand and the moral censors of the media on the other. The reality is that song is the private property of business organizations' (2002, 221).

As a development out of this economic and political disposition, black musicians turned to the IRS as a means to promote their music, for recognition as well as for economic gain. In my interview with Mark Fourie from MCM (Marketing Control Management) the growth of black gospel (for example) in this country came up. Many artists, choirs, and churches make use of independent recording studios to record cost-effective black gospel music.

> We do a lot of Gospel music here at our studios, but it is all black music, black gospel. We are also involved in a studio that is down in Harrismith, which is like Gospel city down there. You know in the greater Harrismith area there are four thousand registered gospel choirs, because that is the amount of churches that are out there. Every church, even if it meets under a tree, has a choir. So we are doing, we do between six and eight gospel choirs a month that come out of Harrismith and that are mastered here, and then released through a distributor (Author's interview 2006).

In addition to the emergence of independent black musicians with the aid of the IRS, Mbeki's idea of the 'African Renaissance' has also served as a motivation for black musicians to embrace, as they have world-wide, 'the promotion and empowerment of distinctly "African" modes of managing modernity and globalization' (Shuker 2002, 111). The IRS would also seem to lie within the philosophy of the 'Proudly South African' campaign:

> an exciting campaign to promote South African companies, products and services which are helping to create jobs and economic growth in our country. Supported by organized labour, organized business, government and community organizations, Proudly South African is the way for every South African to do something concrete to support job creation, and help build our young nation (www.proudlysa.co.za, accessed 12.6.07).

In these respect the IRS appears to be the perfect vehicle to aid and promote black music in South Africa. Indeed, with talent such as Johnny Clegg and Ladysmith Black Mambazo, black South African music is enjoying the spotlight, and is supported locally through CD sales and attendance at live events. In addition, black musicians are much in demand nowadays on the corporate front as well as in the recording studios. As a result of the IRS role in the music industry, then, it can be seen to serve as an aid in black economic empowerment, providing more opportunities to black musicians to embark on a financially stable career as musicians with deserved recognition in the popular music scene of South Africa. In this sense it is ironic that the most successful local small independent recording studios in Gauteng, the focus of my research, should all (still) be run by white managers.

2.4. The changing state of the recording industry and the emergence of an 'independent factor'

Although a brief history of recording has been discussed, this section aims to provide the history of recording and the music industry that lead (with the aid of technological advance) to independence both internationally and locally.

2.4.1. Historical development

With the development of the Victrola and subsequently other recording devices, the recording industry developed towards the end of the twentieth century into

> a huge billion dollar multi-national industry. A report by Schweizerische Radio- und Fernsehgesellschaft in 1979 found that only two per cent of the people it surveyed never listened to music at home, and that more than two-thirds of those aged between fifteen and seventy agreed with the statement 'I can't imagine a life without music' (Day 2000, 200).

Early pop icons such as Elvis Presley, The Beatles and Jerry Lewis started recording at independent recording studios (not run from home but in from an office environment) with an independent recording label. Subsequently the indies started 'selling out' to majors, and eventually the record industry was dominated by the major record labels. Sometimes the same studio was used as a radio broadcast studio, using tape as the recording medium.

> The equipment was not expensive and tape was re-usable. They included small set-ups in regional cities, like Sam Philips's Recording Service in Memphis, Tennessee, the studio of Sun Records where in 1953 Elvis Presley cut his first discs which popular commentators would dare to call the birthplace of rock 'n roll (Chanan 1995, 103).

One of the contributing factors to 'selling out' was the emergence of singles. Artists from that era relied on a successful single to endorse their album release in order to move from independent to major labels.

> In the 1980s new single formats gained an increasingly significant market share. There was a massive increase in sales of cassette singles in America, which sold 32.7 million in the first half alone of 1989, already surpassing the 1988 full-year total of 22.5 million. In 1990, Swedish band Roxette's 'Listen to Your Heart' became the first single to hit No. 1 in the United States without being released as a vinyl 25. Twelve-inch singles, including remixes, became an important part of the dance music scene, and, accompanying the general rise of the CD format, the CD single also began to emerge as a popular marketing form and consumer preference (Shuker 2002, 272).

Another factor was ease of reproduction. Shuker mentions this as a factor contributing to the dominant wealth of the culture industries. Although the creating and promoting of an original album was astronomical, reproduction in comparison was inexpensive. Once the master copy is created, whether it is a CD or a music video, reproduction is inexpensive and infinite.

Major companies have dominated the record industry for many years, but more recently the smaller companies have gained ground in the economy of recording. Patrick Schaerer, one of the people whom I interviewed for this research (interviews being an important part of this research methodology as explained in Chapter 3), talks about how the majors' distribution paved the way for independent distribution companies to become independent record labels, and subsequently independent record studios:

> In the old days there were basically three companies that did distribution in America. And there was a similar structure in Europe as well. And what happened was, if you were a record label, it wasn't owned by a major, or didn't have a distribution channel into the major distribution [be]cause they did their own distribution in a way. So that's where the name of independent record label came out. It was all these old wacky guys who started the recording. And they would run the record label, the recording studio, and they would come up with

> the different technology to record in different ways and different stereo techniques and things (Author's interview 2006).

Note that Schaerer makes a distinction between recording studios and a record label. A recording studio is a place where bands record and embraces the physical recording process such as laying down tracks, mastering, mixing etc. A record label handles all the legal aspects such as contracts, management, distribution and marketing. A major recording company such as EMI and SONY fulfil both functions; i.e. they are a recording facility (whether it is on their premises or not) and a record label.

Patrick Schaerer further distinguishes, however, between the 'major' label and the 'major-minor':

> You've got majors and you've got major-minors. Major would be anything like EMI and Warner Brothers and that. Then you've got the thing called major-minor. A major-minor is any sub-label that has been bought by a major or that has been run by, if you look at something like Ireland or Death Jam or any of these kind of labels like that. They are actually long term major, but they are kept as a separate entity for smokes and light effect or they do a separate sub genre like Death Jam, or they specialize maybe in hip-hop or something like that, just to give it that look. You don't exactly want to be a hard-core gangster and go and buy an EMI hip hop CD. So that is why they keep it on a sub-label (Ibid).

Major labels of the twentieth century such as Colombia, BBC, EMI and Sony had total control over the record labels and the music industry as a whole by the end of the 1970s due to the analogue method of recording: these big industries were the only ones able to afford the costly big analogue equipment. However, with the age of computer technology, as Chats Devroop's work has explored (2002) more and more music recordings became digital, more and more software was released on the subject of own recording, and eventually the man in the street had enough knowledge, money, and digital resources to start recording his own music: 'technology is defined as the application of science concepts and knowledge to problem-solving, which may include many things, from processes to hardware' (Spotts and Bowman quoted in Devroop 2002, 2).

The producers of the independent record labels that worked in independent recording studios (funded by the majors) experimented with different technology and together with the emergence of digital recording equipment the way was paved for these funded

studios to become independent from the majors. Patrick Schaerer speaks about the economical factors leading towards independence and the subsequent movement towards home studios as we know them today.

> The record labels came about, they only truly came about in the last ten years when the costs of equipment came down and people started to - you know people wanted to record, they didn't wanna pay for a recording space anymore. You either had an engineer who said 'Shit! I get booked for a session and I pay 50% of what I earn to a studio. If I took six different sessions today I could buy the gear myself!' And more and more people did that. So you had people going from these big PSSL four thousand g's which are beautiful machines moving into smaller and smaller studios. And it carried on and became smaller smaller and smaller. And then the blurred line between home-studios and pro-studios occurred. And then you had guys that did part time work for buddies or part time recordings for buddies. That is what we know now as home studios I suppose' (Author's interview 2006).

It is quite clear that technology was and is the single most important factor contributing to the emergence of the small independent recording studio. Affordability of sound recording gear has made it possible for aspiring record producers to fund their own facility, and apart from affordability, digital recording equipment wasn't, and isn't, hard to operate. In fact, some major recording companies such as Yamaha even promoted the idea of 'home recording':

> In 1990 a Yamaha advertisement published in many music magazines (including titles like *Music Technology* and *Electronic Musician*) read: 'Go to your room and play using the MT2X Multi-track Recorder/Mixer, you can layer your recording just as you would in a real studio – one track at a time. So if you've been wondering where you're going to get your first big break in music, now you know. At home' (Chanan 1995, 154).

Performing artists, even those tied to big record labels (such as 'Sting' and 'Bon Jovi') started building their own recording studios in their homes so as to give them the opportunity to lay down a track whenever they felt inspired. I have read many articles in music magazines about bands ('Simple Plan', 'Bird York', 'Steriogram') that hook up to their PC in hotel rooms when they are on tour, laying down original tracks or even click-tracks or 'guide tracks' for their performance that evening.

> With a seemingly endless touring schedule, a new album in the works and a side gig as a producer in his own right, [Jeff] Stinco is the picture of today's multitasked musician who keeps his hand in all aspects of the business. Armed with the Black Box, Fast Track Pro, ProjectMix I/O and Pro Tools M-Powere, M-Audio technology plays a pivotal role in helping Stinco deliver his best

> performances onstage as well as capture inspiration wherever it happens to strike (M-Audio Magazine Dec 2006, 12).

In some cases having a mobile recording studio has become a necessity. 'Bird York' for example had to take a portable studio with her when she was completing a film at the same time as the album *Wicked Little High*: 'York simply packed up her FireWire 1814, and a microphone, and went on the road' (Shih Dec 2006, 16). By 1990 it was recognised that digital technology was providing 'hitherto unattainable powers of sound synthesis and processing which have given access to a world of sound unimaginable twenty years ago' (Maill 1990, 160).

In Colin Symes's *Setting the Record Straight* he describes the personal computer as another factor contributing to the technological development of digital recording, and the recording industry embracing the change into the digital age:

> the current technologies of information preservation and distribution that are now commonplace might render the recording obsolete, as many of its functions and facilities are 'colonized' by the personal computer. The recording industry itself has never been hesitant in terms of embracing the latest technology or finding ways of establishing synergies between records and other up-and-coming media (2004, 249).

This is precisely why 'indies' could take advantage of the market that the recording industry had to offer them. With the space age came the sense of space saving and technological advances that made it easy for the man on the street to create his own studio with the minimum equipment available in a minimal space in his home. In addition the 'widespread use of inexpensive multitrack recorders and the spread of homemade cassette[s] '(Shuker 2002, 296) made this economically viable for the first time. Apart from the affordability of digital recording equipment, the benefits from a physical and artistic point of view were also significant.

> The recording machine could now be removed from the same space as the performers, thus bringing about the design of the modern recording studio with its separate control room, which became the domain of the engineer. The amplifier could be used to modulate the loudness and tone of the performer, while in the studio itself, instead of the musicians directing their sound into a recording horn at full volume, the microphone would free the performers by permitting more natural positions for singers and instrumentalists. In short, electrical recording was conducive to more relaxed and artistic performance (Chanan 1995, 158).

The advantage of moving from the analogue to the digital age, Dorge and Jerse point out, includes 'superior noise performance': information is stored as numbers and not an analogue signal, which 'protects the sound more effectively against degradation during long-term storage' and has the advantage that duplication is an absolute duplication of the original, with no compromising of quality (1986, 31).

2.4.2. Sociological factors leading to independence

The majors had (up to the 1970's) more often than not total control over every production of the artist, employing their own producers and studio musicians. The artist had little creative control (if any) over his product. Moreover, major companies could decide since they owned the artist's product, on the ways of distribution and the price of the product. In promoting a product, artists often were instructed to spend months on the road away from their home environment, family and friends. Often major companies, because of money spent on the artist's album and distribution and advertising, also had a say in the physical image of the artist – signing an artist to a clothing label, say, with or without their consent. Magda Steyn comments on this as follows:

> The way in which companies have conducted, managed, controlled and integrated their business operations have experienced dramatic changes during the last couple of years – this is especially true in the worldwide recording and music industries. Rapid advances in technology and increasing regulatory freedom have changed the rules of operation and competition (Steyn 2005, 2).

Individual artists thus have long had the need to be more independent and less tied to the major recording companies. Apart from the new opportunities created for indie artists, more opportunities were also created for the recording industry. In fact – the industry couldn't keep up with all the work, which in turn provided more work and prospects for the small independent recording industry in South Africa.

> The South African recording industry provides a unique and compelling case for creating value through outsourcing – and ultimately through the total integration of supply. The local industry's dramatic history of growth, its sheer pace, the magnitude of change and increasingly complex and global supply chains have created huge challenges for all participants. Traditional channel structures and behaviours in the industry's supply chains have not kept pace with these changes. In the markets of the future, comprehensive management

> which collaborate with the supply chain as a whole is needed to fulfil the new demands set by players and consumers alike (Ibid, 3).

This is especially true when one considers the impact of the indies on the consumer. As part of the development of the South African music market, many big companies outsource the creation of the actual product to independents such as Chris Harper Studios. During an interview he explains why:

> At that point EMI, and other big companies, they weren't using their own studios anymore. They were also starting to subcontract private studios. They started that because they started to see that home studios started to spring up like mushrooms because everything became digital (Author's interview 2006 Chris Harper).

2.4.3 Economic factors leading to independence

Apart from the move into the digital age and the strive for artists to be independent, there was always competition from the indies on an economic level. Shuker discusses the phenomenon of greater market competition, especially from the smaller or newer record companies, being prevalent at times where there were a larger number of top-selling records. At such times the increase in competition went hand in hand with an increase in innovation and diversity, particularly from the indies. The majors have in some ways not benefited from these innovations, because, 'while concentrat[ing] on exploiting their back catalogue and squeezing money out of their superstars [they] have neglected to invest and the [indie] record companies have gained market share at the expense of the majors (Shuker 2002, 59).

The IRS that had gained capital and status started impacting on the economic structure of the industry, specifically on major companies such as EMI and Warner Brothers. Big record companies are understandably hesitant to run the risk of losing capital on a new product. Day (2000, 113) illustrates this fact: 'The American conductor Erich Leinsdorf complained that the major companies were always unwilling, whether they were 'in prosperity or in distress', to record a work for the first time'.

Therefore majors started losing their grip as absolute power entities in terms of economic power. They are currently trying to re-establish their position by investing

large sums in novel artists. This in turn ‘develops a cycle of innovation and consolidation’ (Ibid). Monopolistic conglomerates are formed

> during periods of market stability, and inhibit the growth of independents, which are usually the source of new ideas. Yet under conditions of oligopoly there is also a growing unsated demand, from those who are not satisfied with the prevailing product available. Small record labels emerge to pioneer the new sound and style, followed by reconcentration and market stagnation once more as the majors regain control (Ibid, 60).

Shuker identifies another category in relation to the economics of the recording industry, which he calls the ‘political economy’: the ‘interplay between economic organization and political, social and cultural life’ (2002, 221). This has its starting point in the fact that the ‘producers of mass media are industrial institutions preoccupied with profit-making, and the broadcast media are engaged in selling audiences to advertisers’, and at the same time these institutions are also owned and controlled ‘by a relatively small number of people, and their marked tendency towards increased concentration, is a situation involving considerable ideological power’ (Ibid).

Although the indies have established some competitive trends in the industry, then, and also established a niche in their own right, they are often still reliant on majors for distribution of their products, and sometimes for recording contracts of their signed artists. As John Paul from B-Sharp Studios says, ‘Nowadays you have to do your own recording – before you get a [distribution] deal’ (Author’s interview 2006).

The switch from analogue to digital with the development of accessible hardware and software, and the relatively inexpensive means to set up a home recording studio, combined with the need of the artists to be independent from a major as well as the opportunity for the indies to compete against the majors economically and creatively, paved the way for home studios or independent recording studios to become independent, locally as well as internationally.

2.5. Definition of the small independent recording studio

In terms of my research I initially defined the IRS as Colin Larkin identifies it, as a recording and production facility independent of the majors. He sees them very much as 'labels', although my working definition was broader than this.

> Indies are small record labels which are independent from the majors (at least in terms of the productive and creative process of artist acquisition and promotion), thought still reliant on a major for distribution. These labels are frequently considered to be more flexible and innovative in their roster of artists (Larkin 2002, 3).

Where there is collaboration between a 'minor' and a 'major', forcing independents to 'increasingly adopt the business practices of the majors, in the process moving away from their traditional cultural goals of artistry and creativity', the resulting 'hybrid label – a privately-held company that deals with a major for important production elements or that receives some of its operating funds from a major' (Ibid) has also increasingly become the pattern for small independent recording studios in South Africa.

The interaction between the majors and independents in such situations, however, remains a dynamic process, as Shuker points out (2002, 170). The indies are also associated with new trends and genres in the business. In the words of Larkin: 'It is an attitude with a sound' (Larkin Ibid).

To summarize, the independent recording studio in Gauteng can be defined as a recording facility that emerged during the past fifteen years because of the following factors: economic constraints from the majors, technological development, the rapid growth of digital technology, and changes in the social pattern of music making. It is a digitally operating entity found among the self-employed musician, concerned mostly with recording local artists at an affordable rate. It is this working definition that I have in mind when referring to the IRS as I present data in the following chapters. At the end of this report I revisit it and redefine it according to conclusions drawn from my research.

CHAPTER 3: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND METHODOLOGY

3.1. Theoretical framework

This research project is broadly situated in the field of musicology, in the sense that musicology constitutes 'the whole body of systematized knowledge about music which results from the application of a scientific method of investigation or research, or of philosophical speculation and rational systematization to the facts, the processes and development of musical art, and to the relation of man in general' (Shuker 2002, 208).

I focus on the 'processes and development of musical art' in the independent recording studio and how this process influences or relates to 'man in general' i.e. society. This thus is both a social and a cultural study, and particularly a study of technology and resources and how people manage them. In devising a theoretical framework I have drawn on the literature on music technology, ethnomusicology, cultural studies, popular music, and economics; but the larger framework that holds my ideas is musicological, and musicology itself is a huge field indebted to writings about (among other things) the culture industries.

A term probably first coined and certainly developed by Adorno (2006a [jointly with Horkheimer in 1947]), the term 'culture industry' referred in their hands to commercial and business enterprises that manipulated mass culture – Adorno is very precise on the point that such industries did not necessarily include the production of mass or popular culture itself but comprised the processes by which cultural products 'are tailored for consumption by masses [and] to a great extent determine[s] the nature of that consumption' (98). Colonized nations such as South Africa, moreover, 'gave rise to global relations of dominance, subordination and dependency between the affluence and power of the advanced capitalist nations' (Ibid). The culture industries, then, concerned the 'production' of mass popular culture in an economic and marketing sense. Shuker echoes this when he says that culture industries are those economic institutions 'which employ the characteristic modes of production

and organization of industrial corporations to produce and disseminate symbols in the form of cultural goods and services, generally, though not exclusively, as commodities' (Shuker 2002, 82).

How does the independent recording industry in South Africa fit into this picture? It can be seen as very much part of the cultural industry in an economic sense. Shuker sees it as dependent on the majors which in turn are 'part of a larger communications or electronics conglomerate' (Ibid, 59); although I am not so concerned as Shuker is about the role this situation plays 'in the creation of meaning in popular music' (Ibid). The indies are far less concerned with mass production and dissemination, and very little with 'tailoring' music 'for consumption by masses'. On the contrary, the IRS is more concerned with recording than production, and furthermore most studios have a small clientele for whom they tailor their products to the individual requirements of that clientele, and not to mass requirements. This is not to say that the products of IRS work are not to some extent generic, but that there is far greater scope for individualism and uniqueness than there might appear in Adorno's gloomy vision of the industry – based, it is true, on its impact in the earlier twentieth century under German fascism.

Adorno's main concerns about the culture industry were the commoditisation of music and the desensitisation of listeners through mass production. The IRS however, is not a site for the mass production and fetishization of a commodity or for the 'regression' as he called it, of listening (2006b). In my research I found that my informants were not only interested in the product as commodity but also in the process and their relationship with the client. Although indies are a spin-off from the major recording industry, they are not making huge profits. The main theoretical issue here, then, is not how the IRS deals with products but how it enables and manages relationships and processes.

I am also interested in the IRS's power relation with the majors. On the one hand the IRS receives spin-offs from the majors and on the other hand they are dwarfed by them – thus there is always a socio-economic tension between the two. My theoretical framing has to take into account the notion of IRS as an aspect of the 'culture industry' in a general contemporary sense, but it also addresses some of Adorno's

concerns in that I argue that the IRS empowers musicians and regains some measure of individualism for artists and producers.

The relationship of majors to minors has been affected by the impact of globalization on Western capitalism, 'particularly evident in its media conglomerates and the increasingly international nature of Western popular music [which] undermined the applicability of cultural imperialism, at least in any straightforward fashion' (Shuker 2002, 82). The hold of the majors over the minors, in short, became less imperialistic as the twentieth century went by, giving the opportunity for indies to make a more permanent mark in the entertainment field. Although the majors still economically overshadow indies the IRS still have a significant – and increasing – concern with the micro dynamics of the product. Indeed, majors may well face more uncertainty in terms of the music recording industry than minors, an uncertainty brought about by investment in smaller industries that operate on a micro level so as to minimize risk to their major operation, even at the expense of mega-profits. The main reason majors contract out recording sessions to indies is to cut costs and minimize capital investment.

One of the most useful concepts for my theoretical framework came from sociologists Felstead and Jewson's idea of 'technologies of the self' in relation to the increasingly sociologically important practice (worldwide) of what they call 'homeworking' – working from home (2000). This draws upon Foucault's concept of 'techniques of self': 'those intentional and voluntary actions by which men not only set themselves rules of conduct, but also seek to transform themselves, to change themselves in their singular being, and to make their life an *oeuvre* that carries certain aesthetic values and meets certain stylistic criteria' (McKinlay & Starkey [ed] 1998, 234).

Although managing an IRS is as much an economic as an aesthetic or stylistic enterprise, and usually a social rather than individual one, the element of setting boundaries or 'rules of conduct' and the transformation of people and (more especially) their home environment into a productive workplace, is something one can draw from Foucault into the notion of working in the home studio. The IRS persona's genealogy stems from what Foucault calls the 'subjectivisation' which requires him to 'act upon himself, to monitor, test, improve and transform himself' in

order to achieve the notion of self-creation; to 'create ourselves as a work of art' (Foucault 1991, 351 quoted in McKinlay & Starkey [ed] 1998, 235). Although I initially focused on the 'studio' as my subject matter, I soon came to realize that it is the *individuals* in the studio – the managers – who encapsulate its essence and who make each one unique. The notion of 'homeworking', basing a business and all its dynamic functioning near or in the living space, and the problem of how a producer functioned in this environment, became the most fascinating aspect of this research. One can agree with Foucault that home studio owners not only create works of art, but in the process create themselves as a work of art.

In my research I try to develop a theory of the IRS presenting a successful alternative to the huge recording companies. Although the IRS is still very much part of the culture industries at large, it works in undermining ways, and I hope that my research will show how successfully IRS are operating as independents working on a micro level. In order to explore these issues I have designed a research methodology using literature and collecting original data by means of interviews.

3.2. Methodology

My first step was to survey the literature on the history of the recording and the independent recording industry in South Africa and abroad from a musical, political and social perspective, and to survey internet sites related to this phenomenon. Literature relating to the past fifteen years of popular music and jazz in South Africa also helped to determine the size of this field of research. From the perspective of Adorno's culture industries I conducted this research focusing on the socio-economic implications of this phenomenon.

The major source of information, however, was interviews conducted in IRS studios that fitted certain criteria (discussed in detail at the beginning of Chapter 4 below). My interviews were limited to ten studios in the central Gauteng area, more specifically Johannesburg, which became case studies in the development and socio-economy of the independent recording studio in the country. The studios were chosen on the basis of how many years they have existed independently, the number of commercial productions they do, the equipment they use, and the way they are

arranged and managed. The case studies were thus limited by function rather than the type of music they are involved in, and they are Kulundu Trading, Mac Sound Studios, Stone Music Productions, B Sharp Studios, Sean Butler Studios, Edwin Randall Music Incorporated, Marketing Control Management (MCM), Harper Music, and Mugo Studios. I also used my own studio, Power Music Entertainment, as a source of comparison.

I first had an informal discussion with the managers of these studios to gain their consent, and then designed interview questions to draw out insights into the economic and social implications of independent studios and their impact on the music industry, as well as observing, describing and photographing various angles of the studios. The interviews took the shape of open-ended discussion allowing the interview to go beyond the scope of questions provided, although questions of the same nature were asked at every interview. These questions are presented as an introduction to Chapter 4. Important issues emerged from the combination of literature and interviews about the socio-economic context of the IRS, and it may be useful to summarise them before presenting data from the interviews in the following chapters.

3.3. Socio-economic context

In South Africa there were until recently five big international record companies – also commonly known as the majors or the Big Five: Sony Music Entertainment Incorporated, Gallo Record Company, BGM (Bertelsmann Music Group), UMPG (Universal Music Publishing Group) and the EMI group. Sony and BMG have since merged (in 2004). Although Gallo is considered a major in South Africa, the establishment is slightly diverse in that it started out as an independent company. Gallo is a currently a subsidiary of Johnnic-Warner which is an international major. Apart from the majors we also have a significant number of recording studios at the other end of the scale. Steyn (2005) makes a special reference to this group, which she calls the ‘indies’:

> They are much smaller than [the] international corporations and they contract mainly local artists. It is worthwhile to note that lately, the number of *international independents* operating in South Africa have also been growing, especially record companies from the rest of the African continent now marketing and selling their music in South Africa (47; her emphasis).

It is difficult to determine how many indies might be out there in South Africa (Appendix 1 is a first attempt), but I suspect from information I have gathered through interviews and surfing the web, there must be hundreds, if not thousands of indies operating in this country. One of the reasons for this might be because independent smaller recording companies are more willing to try new projects, especially since most of these projects are funded by the artist, or subcontracted to them by bigger recording studios. Among the studios I studied, six do subcontracted work (B Sharp Studios, Sean Butler Studios, Stone Productions, Mugo Studios, MCM, and Chris Harper Studios).

Subcontracting works for majors because if a project is unsuccessful in terms of distribution and concert earnings, they won't have lost a lot of revenue in terms of production, so subcontracting to indies carries less risk. In addition, it is cheaper to hire an independent studio than to maintain the upkeep and constantly upgrade studios on their own premises. In terms of studio time, ownership and production costs, it makes sense to contract out. If the major is not satisfied with the indies' work, it is easy to transfer the project to another studio, or even to divide different stages of production among several independents. One of my interviewees, Chris Harper, also brought in the supply-and-demand factor: 'they started to see that home studios started to spring up like mushrooms because everything became digital. One studio cannot possibly supply the demand for work. So they contract it out'; and he noted a spin-off for the IRS, that it 'is actually very good for you, because immediately you are associated with a studio, a big name' (Author's interview 2006, Chris Harper).

As Steyn puts it, '[t]he South African recording industry provides a unique and compelling case for creating value through outsourcing – and ultimately through the total integration of supply' (2005, 03). Indies that take advantage of outsourcing can greatly benefit. The socio-economic consequences of outsourcing are also that 'independent record companies have in the past few years contributed a lot to diversity and innovation' and 'have gained market share at the expense of the majors' (Shuker 2002, 60).

One of the advantages small independent studios have over majors is that they don't spend a lot of capital getting started, and therefore run less risk of losing revenue:

> CH: In fact it became cheaper and cheaper, ja, you still need a good couple of thousand, say more that R10 000 to buy a home studio of reasonably good quality.
>
> IH: Not like R 250 000.
>
> CH: Ja exactly (Author's interview 2006, Chris Harper).

The artist also benefits financially and in terms of job opportunities, without the pressure of confirming to a particular style. 'Job diversification – the combination of studio, teaching, and live performance skills – is obviously an important part of maximizing potential, but so is *style* diversification – the ability to perform different kinds of music. Pursue both job and style diversification and you'll never be out of work' (Dearing 1982, 21).

The socio-economic context of the IRS also includes, of course, other aspects of the music industry, of which, as Shuker points out, recording is only a part.

> The music industry embraces a range of institutions and associated markets: the recording companies and the retail sector, producing and selling recordings in their various formats; the music press; music hardware, including musical instruments and sound recording and reproduction technology; merchandising (posters, t-shirts, etc); and royalties and rights and their collection/licensing agencies (2002, 62).

The dilemma for artists is that many of these aspects are under the control of a parent company, but this also has the positive effect of driving more people to become independents. Moreover, as Steyn points out, '[t]he South African market is a colourful mix between countless young and upcoming individual artists, groups and bands; the more mature singers who have been around for a while and the really successful ones'. There are other advantages, she says, to choosing to follow the independent route,

> [t]he major one being that the artists receive all profits from the sales of their titles themselves, and do not have to share it with a record company. On the other hand, the major disadvantage is that these artists often become 'jacks of all trades', because they are not able to concentrate purely on their core

> competence which is making music, but also have to get involved in all other logistical aspects of the manufacture, sale and distribution (2005, 38).

It is not too difficult to be able to operate the machinery of your own home studio. Digital hardware and software come with manuals, trial and error does not necessarily cost money, and there is an enormous amount of information available in books, journals, and magazines and on the internet. Indies may, as Burgess suggests, 'spend ages working out things that are basic to the pros', but the 'upside of the self-teaching-method is that you will have the opportunity to develop a unique style' (2005, 32).

Even in terms of the performer, equipment used at home makes it easier for them to operate in an IRS. All musicians nowadays need to have a hands-on knowledge of equipment as many of them do their own mixing and sound at live gigs.

> When I work with bands now, everybody in music is much more familiar with the options one has in the studio. People know about delays, they know about reverbs, because they all have home versions of the more expensive items in the studio. Whereas when I first started making records, the studio was more of a mystery. You went in there and they did what they did. You went out in a room and played and then came in and listened to it. If you went back to the time of The Beatles, the engineers used to wear lab coats because they considered themselves technicians (Ibid, 33).

So is it all positive? What are the drawbacks of setting up an IRS? Garfield in *Expensive habits: The dark side of the music industry* claimed in 1986 that becoming an independent record label, at any rate, was not necessarily a good idea because

> your chances of success are slim, chances of sustained success even slimmer (and the chances are you'll get bought out by a major anyway). There are exceptions, but fairly few. And your chances of getting large-scale American success – where the real money is, of course – are strictly less than zero. In other words, you've got to be in to win, and if you want to win, you have to play the big game with the grown-up rules (1986, 18).

The situation has, however, changed radically in the past twenty years. Distribution has become far easier for small labels and indies, even for self-published musicians, through the Internet, and cheap digital technology has given people more control over their performing, composing and recording lives.

Dearing suggested twenty-five years ago that making a demo tape or CD was a waste of time and money, and warned musicians against the need to be independent by spending large quantities of money on a product or demo that is never heard or never taken up in mainstream music: 'After having demo after demo returned, you begin wondering whether companies are even listening to your tape. Be assured, some don't. Entire artist and repertoire departments have been closed at some companies' (Dearing 1982, 8). This situation may well still be true, as many musicians still record demos these days, though for slightly different reasons. In order to be booked for a gig many agents or potential clients seek a demonstration tape or CD before they are willing to book the artist, and look to the IRS to do this for them. Demos are used on the websites of musicians or artists as a means of advertising. Moreover, no major recording company will even grant an interview without a CD or a demo at hand. (What one can more or less be sure of, however, is that if you make a demo with an IRS it will be high quality, and furthermore there are other outlets for the demo such as radio and clubs.)

In terms of the recording process things have definitely changed since 1982, for the better. One can produce an equally good album, single, or demo album (provided you use good equipment and a good producer) and get radio play from there. At least that seems to be the case in South Africa. Bianca le Grange for example, runner up in the *Idols* competition in 2002, released her first single, obtained radio-play from there and completed her self-titled album *Bianca* a couple of months later (backed by her own company Besupreme Music). By then her first song had been played on most radio-stations in South Africa and her career was soaring. Once you have a good product, a marketing manager or promoter and a distribution deal, your path is more or less open to pursue a full time career as a performing and recording artist.

Another change is that the 'global music industry is no longer so dominated by the United States and Britain; it is less concerned with the production and management of commodities, and more with the management of rights'. Thus, Shuker continues, the former 'distinction between major record companies and the independents has become blurred' (Shuker 2002, ix). The big record companies in a sense have almost passed the buck to the independents concerning the actual production of a recording and are more interested in making money through management and distribution. One

of my interviewees even suggested that ‘they don’t want to be involved with musicians. They just want a product. It doesn’t matter if it is an umbrella, a tampon, or a CD. They don’t care’ (Author’s interview 2007 Mark Fourie).

There are thus many reasons for artists to go independent, so independent that they manage themselves and don’t even go to the effort of finding a manager or a promoter. Garfield pointed this out a long time ago, and it still pertains to some extent although the risks he describes have been greatly reduced by the IRS.

> Ask McCartney, Townshend and Ray Davies now about the industry’s snares and they’ll tell you that they still don’t know them all. They’ll maybe tell you that there are no ‘best’ companies, only ‘worst’ ones – and the worst ones are the ones they’ve had to deal with themselves. They’ll tell you to get the best lawyer and the best accountant and to think long term. Good fortune takes over at some point after that. They’ll certainly tell you that the creeping insecurity of how much *they’re* skimming, how far *he’s* screwing, how much *he’s* pocketed, and who the hell slipped *her* a cut, can get worse than the worry of whether the next single’s going to go top twenty. And, in fact, now that you’re terminally fearful that you’ll only get one quarter of what’s owing, your chances of creative peak-scooping have probably diminished a good few perfect chords anyway. So maybe you should leave all the financial working to the specialists and your manager, and do what you’re good at: use your lemons purely to make lemonade (Garfield 1986, 23).

This, then, is the complex background against which independents operate and in which I did my research. In the next Chapter I present the hard data collected from the ten case studies, exploring the function of every studio to show a clear visual and cognitive understanding of the daily running and environment of each one.

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CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION OF DATA COLLECTED

4.1.Criteria for selecting studios

The case studies selected for this research are based on a number of criteria that I developed during the course of reading and preliminary discussion with studio owners:

- the number of hours spent per year in active production could not be less than 500 (average 2 hours per weekday) or more than 2000 (8 hours per weekday);
- the various studios had to have a commercial purpose, whether it be backtracks, jingles, CD productions, demos, or film music;
- they had to have a minimum of three years' experience in the music industry;
- the studio had to function financially independently from the majors (projects outsourced were accepted as long as they weren't the only source of income);
- the number of personnel working in the physical space had to be no more than 4;
- the turnover per year had to be no more than 2 million rands.

I selected ten studios that met this criteria and I visited all of them more than once, interviewing the managers (who are also the owners), noting equipment, and taking photos. I sometimes went back for 'feedback' interviews after I had done the major interview, for clarification on certain things. This aspect of my research was conducted between October 2005 and June 2007.

The location of studios is given on the map below (see Fig 1). They were Penmac Studio (Weltevredenpark, Randburg), Harper Music (Orange Grove), Stone Music Productions (Duxbury, Rivonia), Kulundu Trading (Olifantsfontein), MCM Digital [Market Control Management] (Sunninghill), Sean Butler Studio (Olivedale, Northriding), Mugo Studio (Westdene), Edwin Randall Music Inc.(Westdene), B-Sharp Studio (Boksburg) and my home studio (Power Music Entertainment), which is in Parkhill Gardens, Germiston.

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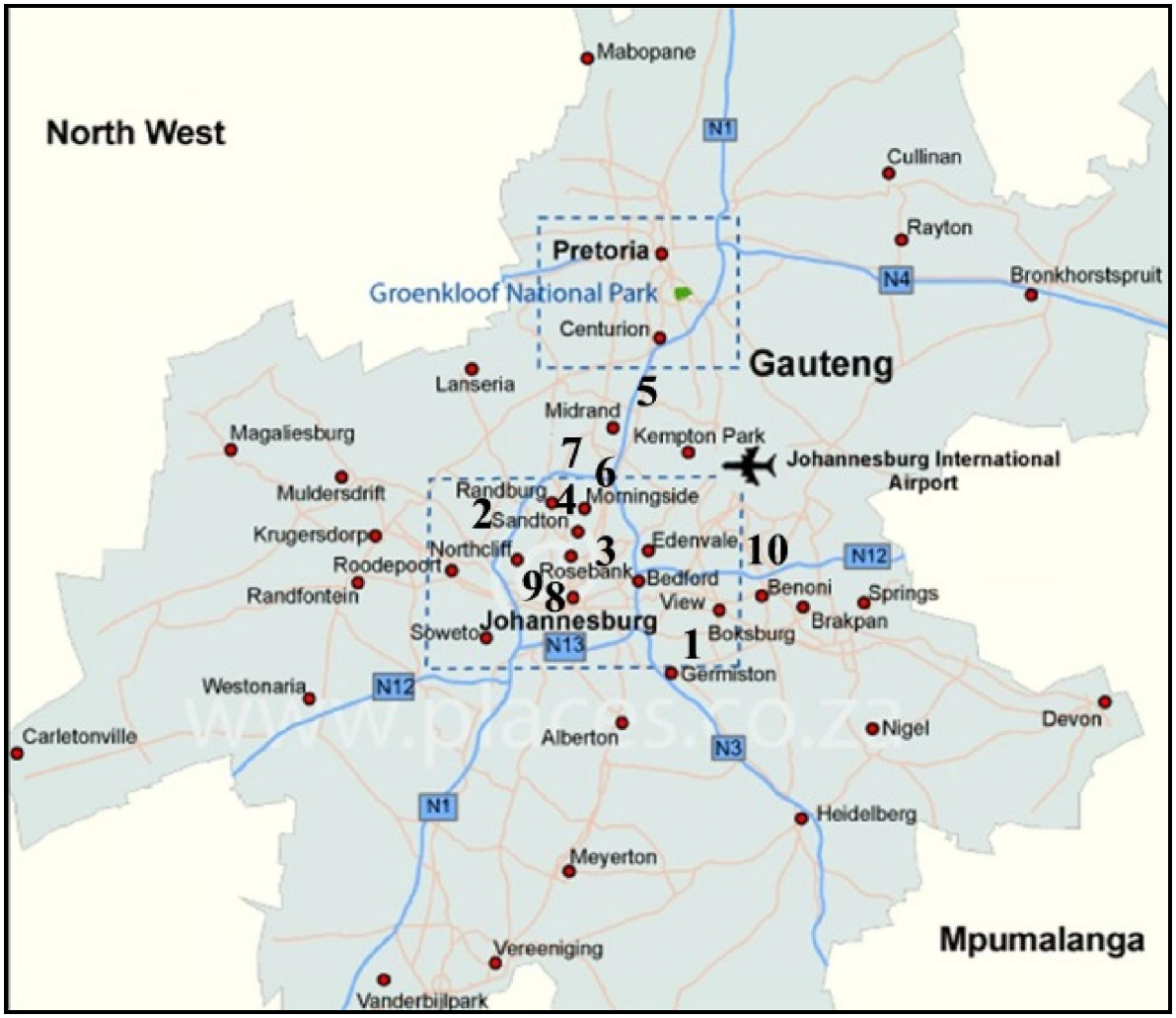


Fig 1 Map of Johannesburg and surrounding area with reference to studio locations (adapted from www.places.co.za)

1	**Power Music Entertainment**
2	**Penmac Studio**
3	**Harper Music**
4	**Stone Music Productions**
5	**Kulundu Trading**
6	**MCM Digital**
7	**Sean Butler Studio**
8	**Mugu Studio**
9	**Edwin Randall Music Inc.**
10	**B-Sharp Studio**

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There was a standard number of things I needed to find out about each studio, so I used the following questions as a framework for discussion:

1. When did you start your studio?
2. What was your main reason for starting your studio?
3. Are you mainly a digital or an analogue studio?
4. If digital; what software are you using?
5. If analogue; what equipment are you using?
6. What software (digital) or equipment (analogue) do you recommend or are you planning to use in future?
7. Percentage wise, what kind of productions are your studio used for?
8. Is this your main income?
9. Do you find your studio work to be financially viable? I.e. does your business break even?
10. How long did it take you to get to a stage of profit?
11. What are your main cash cows i.e. bread and butter jobs?
12. Is this a full time or a part time job?
13. How many hours do you spend on average per day in the studio?
14. In what kind of business were you in before you started this production house?
15. Do you think any qualifications in the sound recording field are necessary for this kind of work?
16. Are you active as a musician outside of your studio?
17. How many productions have you done to date?
18. What kind of people pass through your studio?
19. Do the same people/clients return for more productions?
20. How do you get advertising for clients?
21. When you started your studio did you design the physical space and did you have it built accordingly?
22. How much did it cost you to turn your business into a professional studio, particularly regarding equipment and physical space?
23. What were your priorities for equipment?
24. How frequently do you add to your equipment?
25. Are you planning to expand in the next 6 to 12 months, whether in physical space, equipment, more employees, more productions or specializing in more than your current genres?
26. How do you manage the dynamics of self-employment or workings ‘at home’?

Most of the issues that emerged in response to these questions are dealt with in Chapters 5 to 7. I treated answers in confidence especially around finances, and did not disclose anything here that my informants did not want me to reveal. The more factual and descriptive data is represented and discussed in this Chapter.

4.2. Studios used in this study: a description of physical space and function

Independent studios come in all shapes and sizes, from soundproofed one-car garages to state-of–the-art 24 mix-mastering operations. In between these

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> extremes are four-track and eight-track demo studios, and 16- and 24-track hometown studios. Lately, 24-track mix-mastering facilities have sprung up outside of the industry recording centers (Dearing 1982, 219).

My data will be presented in the form of a brief description and photos to give a clear picture of the physical space in each studio, followed by a discussion of the digital and/or analogue equipment of every studio.[1] Then I will present data from the interviews that deal with explanatory detail of the physical design of space and feel of each studio, followed by a description of each studio's function and economics. I begin with my own studio, Power Music Entertainment, which is run by my husband, Ronald Powell.

4.2.1. Power Music Entertainment

a. Description

Power Music Entertainment in Germiston consists of a studio that is built on our residential premises, separate from the house, at the back of the garage overlooking the garden. The studio has three rooms: main production room, sound booth, and kitchen/bathroom (see Figs 2-5).[2] The main production room is roughly 64 square metres with equipment arranged around the room and a central coffee table; the sound booth and kitchen/bathroom are each about 9 square metres. The studio has wall-to-wall carpeting and four big windows, two of which overlook the garden and have couches beneath them. The windows and glass door provide a lot of light in the room. There are three main work desks including an administrative desk with telephone, fax, and computer separated by an upright piano from the pre-production desk in an L-shape. The pre-production desk contains two keyboards, CD player and LG computer with reference monitors designed to function as a pre-production area. This desk is separated by a fish tank (a relaxation motif) from the post-production desk, also in an L-shape. This desk has an Apple Mac computer with reference monitors separated by

[1] Although I am aware that studios are in a constant state of flux, I felt it important to provide detailed information about each studio as it had been at the time of the interview in order to give the reader a clear picture of the physical and technological environment and how each case study indicated individual differences.

[2] In the case of Power Music the sound booth is small, so it really is a 'booth', but in the case of other studios in this study the booth is more like a 'room'. I thus use both terms, depending on size or how the studio owner describes it.

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a double glass window and door leading into the sound booth. Another door separates the main production room from the kitchen/bathroom.

The entire layout is designed to be as relaxed and comfortable as possible to work in – given that we and our clients (and we!) spend long hours here – hence windows away from the road overlooking a very peaceful garden, comfy chairs, fish-tank, kitchen/bathroom, warm colours. It is a world within a world, which no one has to leave, and it is quite separate from our house.



Fig 2 PME: Main production room showing pre- and post-production work stations

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Fig 3 PME: Main production room showing pre-production and administration work stations



Fig 4 PME: Sound booth

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Fig 5 PME: Kitchen/bathroom

b. Studio setup

Power Music Entertainment has a digitally driven pre-production studio containing a Dell computer loaded with Windows XP professional, Sampletude 7 and Sibelius 4; Roland RD - 600 Weighted Action 88 Note Controller and Yamaha PSR 600 keyboards; two Beringer Monitors; a Wharfdale CD player. The postproduction and recording desk contains an Apple Imac 20" 2 Ghz-Intel Computer loaded with Logic Platinum 7, Garageband, Sibelius 4.x, and Giga Studio 3. The reference monitors are Samsung Resolve 65A speakers and there is a Moto Traveller soundcard and Beringer Powerplay Pro 8 effects unit. The sound booth can easily hold four musicians although it is more comfortable for one at a time; but it is big enough for a drum kit.

c. Development and function of the studio

Ronald Powell and I had the studio built to create an open environment featuring lots of light:

> Because of the amount of time spent in the studio we wanted to have the sort of refreshing [feeling] and very open sort of feeling you know and relaxed sort of atmosphere in the studio. We didn't want it congested or squashed up. There was a great deal of planning that went into developing the studio and building it, but I think we've built it to meet our needs.

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There were personal and professional reasons for building the studio this way, including escaping from pressure of time, because in a large recording studio ‘you are always pressurised for time. For me to work in my own studio is freedom [to] spend as much time as you want to without being pressurised for time and money’ (Author’s interview 2006 Ronald Powell). Another reason was ‘basically for self-improvement, and it is also an interest of mine’.

Power Music Entertainment is mainly a backtrack and CD production facility, with periods of arranging products. Backtracks are created digitally and transferred to the post-production area where they are sound-sampled, mixed and mastered. Ronald is also a musician outside the recording sphere, active as a guitarist, although he works during the day as a Microsoft specialist. The only other person active in the studio is myself, working only on the pre-production side while Ronald is responsible for live recordings and post-production. The studio does not advertise and we get clients by word of mouth, on average between two and five clients a month. Between the two of us we spend at least eight hours a day in the studio.

4.2.2. Penmac av

a. Description of studio

Penmac av is situated on residential premises in Weltevredenpark (Randburg) in an outside cottage behind the driveway. There are four rooms, the first being the audio visual room. This leads to a narrow hallway with a bathroom, and the sound booth on the right leads into the production room. Big windows occupy both ends of the studio; one in the production room (overlooking the garden) and the other in the audio-visual room (overlooking the driveway). The audio visual room is fitted with a series of computer screens on a long desk, and the production room has a desk with a computer screen and effects unit rack and printer/fax. The total square metres are probably around 40. The sound booth occupies not more than 6 square metres and has a double glaze window overlooking the production room (see Figs 6-10).

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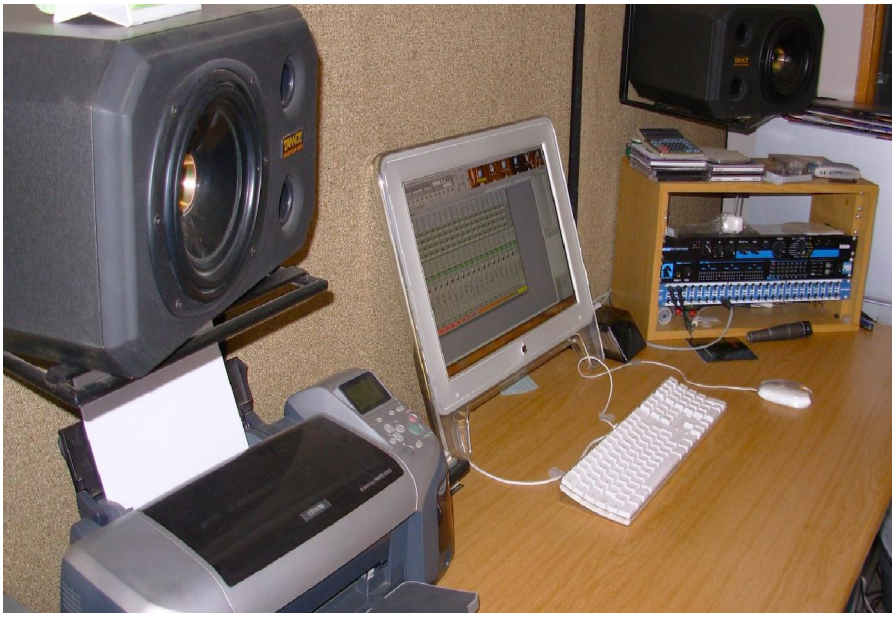


Fig 6 Penmac av: Audio production room desk



Fig 7 Penmac av: Mixing desk and sound booth window

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Fig 8 Penmac av: Audio visual production room view 1



Fig 9 Penmac av: Audio visual production room view 2

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Fig 10 Penmac av: Sound booth

b. Studio setup

When asked how the studio was set up Malcolm Finlay replied, ‘We basically made the studio fitting into the available space, I guess’. He runs his music productions from the main studio computer, which is a Mac G5 with 1-gig RAM, and various external fire-wire hard drives. As a secondary machine he has the Macbook Pro, an IMac, and an Intel PC for visual staging. Penmac also makes use of Mark Of The Unicorn audio breakout box and MOTU 2408 with 24 configurable Input/Output ports. Malcolm’s effects processor is an External Lexicon MPX 100, which he uses with his Studiomaster 16 channel Analogue mixing console. Studio mikes in use are Rode, Sennheiser, Shure and Samson. He also owns ADAT and Fostex external recording decks.

Digital Performer 5.01 is the software that forms the basis of Malcolm’s recordings. ‘For many years I used a software called DEC which was a programme invented a

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long time ago by Macro Media, which they sold [to] various other companies. DEC unfortunately did not keep up with the times, and I have subsequently now changed to Digital Performer'. Malcolm's other software tools include Deck 3.5, Auto-tune, Vocalign, Soundtrack and Final Cut. Although Penmac is stocked with the latest gear, Malcolm remarks that 'the final evaluation is the end product itself, not the tools you use to achieve it'.

c. Development and function of studio

Malcolm Finlay was a guitarist, vocalist, and harmonica player prior to starting his studio. His son is also active in the studio but mostly on the audio-visual side. Malcolm, who has 'a passion for music and a passion for production' and therefore spends 'far too many' hours in the studio, runs the audio recording facility. In response to the question of the nature of the productions in which Malcolm is involved he replied that it is

> a very difficult question because we are very closely linked to the other company which is an audio visual company. We do a lot of audio visual work, and it could be voiceovers, it could be sound tracks, or AV productions. We sometimes do radio ads. If I had to evaluate it on an hourly basis, yes, it must certainly be music productions. That's what takes up the most hours in the studio.

Penmac's service also goes beyond the normal CD recording in that they organize the whole production including, for example, the music rights, the CD cover, the recording, mastering, and printing of the product. They are also invested in creating backtracks and radio ads, and do live recordings in the field, which alone provides Penmac enough publicity without having to invest in advertising.

4.2.3. Harper Music

a. Description

Harper Music is situated in Chris Harper's home in Orange Grove. It occupies one of his rooms, which serves as both office and workstation. The control room leads out of an open-plan lounge. The room is situated (unusually) in the middle of his home and has a wooden floor and a big window overlooking the garden. The workstation is

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arranged in a L-shape with the computer and dual screen and the sound-processors and CD players on one side and two keyboards on the other side. Chris was planning to build a sound booth in the room at the time of the interview in the corner, behind the desk (see Figs 11-13).



Fig 11 Harper Music: Production area view 1

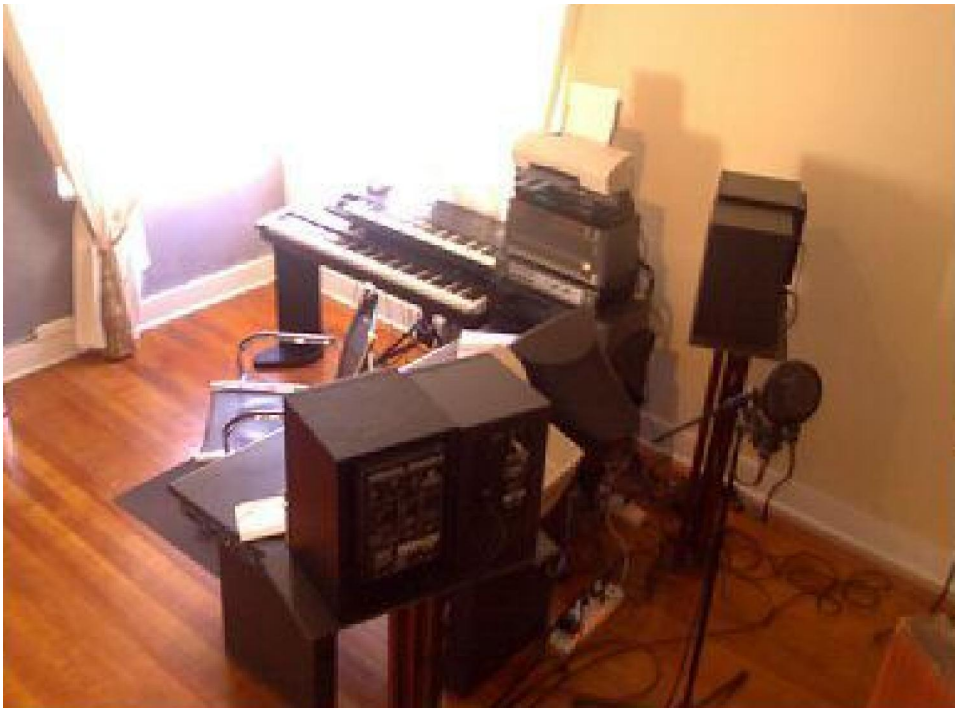


Fig 12 Harper Music: Production area view 2

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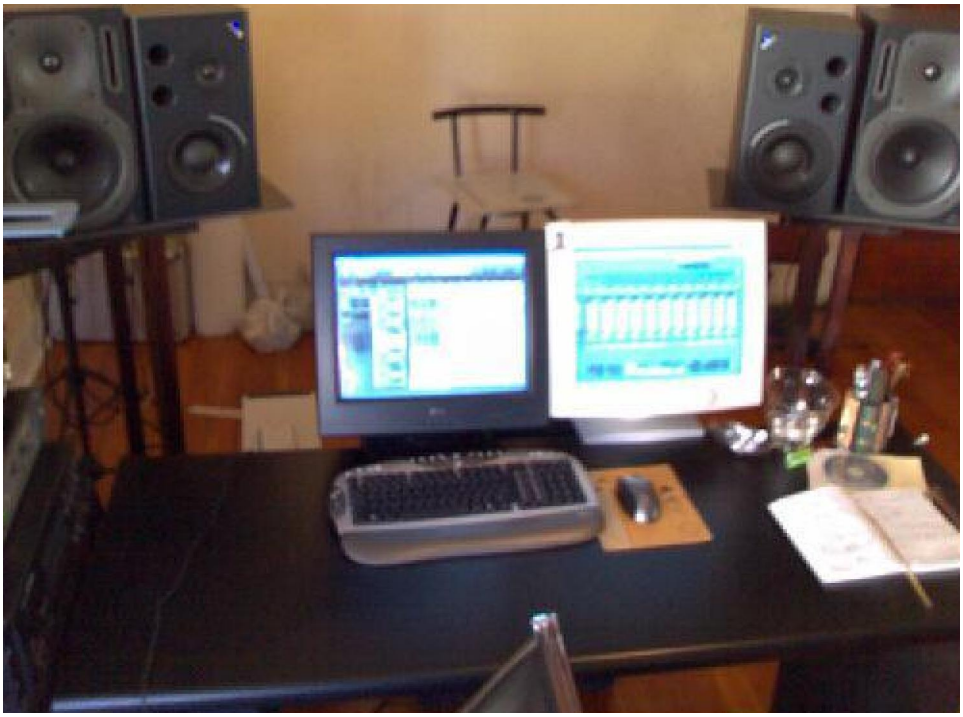


Fig 13 Harper Music: View from production desk to space that will become sound booth

b. Studio setup

Chris Harper's recording software is Cubase SX and Pro Tools LE 6.9 with 1 gig of RAM. He also owns a soft sampler Halion and uses The Grand for a piano sound in Cubase as well as Cubase Score and Cubase Midi arrangements. He has two keyboards, and two sets of monitors, the one being Alesis M1 Active MK2 monitors and the other set Behringer Truth B 2031. Both sets of monitors are self powered, and Chris hooked up the digital console directly to his speakers because 'it impresses the clients!' (Interview 2006).

Chris plans to build the sound booth in a rectangular shape for the acoustics because square rooms are 'really not good for sound, rectangular is better'. He is going to try to put the walls slightly off centre to prevent the sound from bouncing off the wall, which gives the performer a slight delay, and is great for recording. When sound proofing a room he feels it is ideal that a 'booth should be a room within a room', and as Chris hardly ever records drum kits and mostly records one instrument at a time, the size of the sound booth can be relatively small. Chris makes use of his friend Vinnie Henrico to record live drums as 'digital technology makes it possible for me to

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mix in tracks from another studio on my side' (Interview 2006). For now, Chris is recording in the main room which works well since 'it has wooden floors and [sounds] came out beautifully. It sounded very rich very warm, even got a response from the players, good intonation' with a Rode valve microphone for vocal, acoustic guitars, violins and acoustic bass. He uses a SM 58 'which is the most commonly used vocal performance mic' for flute, woodwinds and even cellos.

c. Development and function of studio

Chris Harper is a qualified full-time musician and performer apart from producing albums. His interest in recording was inspired by his studies at Wits with lecturer Bruce Cassidy: 'he use[d] to give us all the advertisements in computer software and how that revolutionized the home studio set-up'. Since analogue recording studios were 'hideously expensive' and digital recording equipment suddenly became affordable (in 1990 when he graduated), Chris decided to start his own studio. Demos constitute between 10% and 20 % of Chris' work, and 60% is dedicated to arranging and recording. The last 20% is spent on small editing jobs, such as equestrian music, and about 2% is film-music. Chris is still an active freelance performer and plays double bass in the Johannesburg Philharmonic Orchestra. He was the producer of some very successful Phoenix ensemble productions and has done all the records for Martin Lane. He has been a musical director for shows in a band where he 'arranged everything and performed it. It was tremendously rewarding'. He has worked on more than a 100 albums to date, some of which were contracted to him by majors. Harper Music has never had the need for advertising, and he runs his business solo.

4.2.4. Stone Music Productions

a. Description

Stone Studios is situated in Duxberry (Rivonia) on the home premises of Michael Hankinson. An entrance hall leads into a big control room with a double-sided window overlooking the sound proof room. The control room occupies at least 70 square metres whilst the spacious sound room, which is about 20 square metres, can fit 'twelve musicians in there comfortably'(Authors interview 2006). The whole

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studio was built with cavity walls and concrete roof and a floating wooden floor: ‘it was properly constructed with acoustic treatment in the ceiling and on the walls so that nothing could seep in’. The control room has a sitting area with a working desk far enough away so that different activities won’t interfere with another.

One side of the production room is covered with a bookcase that contains scores, books and software packages. The sound room or recording area is 24 square metres in an acoustically treated environment with movable acoustic screens, fully air-conditioned, and has a Yamaha C2 grand piano next to a big window overlooking a ½ acre garden (see Figs 14-17).

Not part of the studio but worth mentioning, is Michael’s own personal mini-studio on the second floor of his home. It is fitted with a computer and keyboard and serves as his private office and workstation.



Fig 14 Stone Music: Entrance hall leading to production room

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Fig 15 Stone Music: Production room with window facing sound booth



Fig 16 Stone Music: View of production room from sound booth

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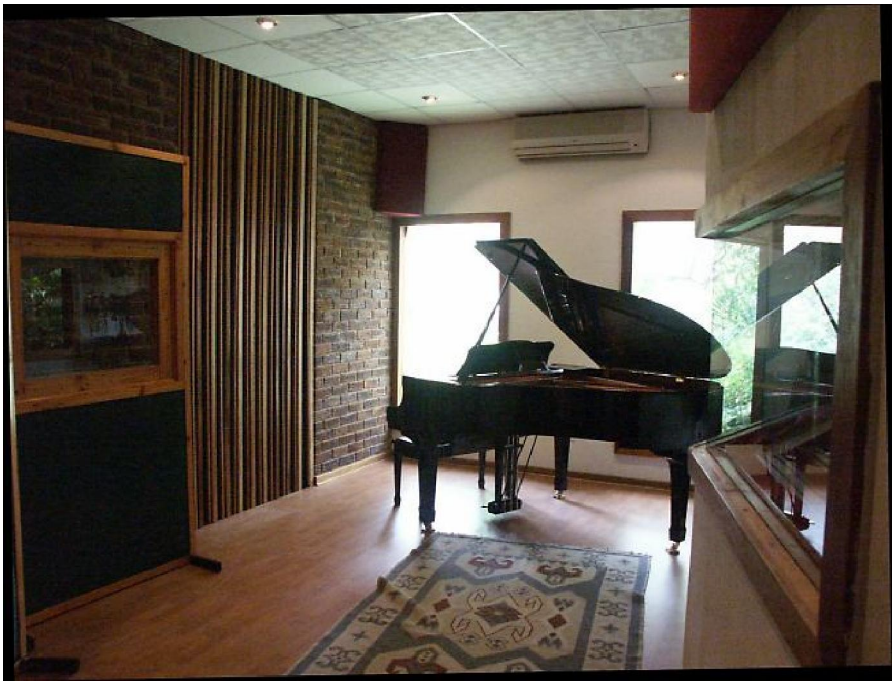


Fig 17 Stone Music: Sound room

b. Studio setup

Stone Music Productions is a very sophisticated studio – the most luxurious 'small' studio I found in my research – using various software packages and equipment. The LCD 32 inch screen for viewing is above the work desk, which has a Yamaha O 13 mixer, 24 track digital tape (used in and out of studio for live recordings), A Macintosh Powerbook G5 (with a G4 used as a spare) 1.67 Mhz with Logic Pro 7 and fully loaded with software synths. The recording gear is able to record up to twenty-four tracks simultaneously either straight onto hard disk or onto digital tape. There are three Tascam DTRS Digital Recorders (DA-88) and a Tascam DA-20 Dat Recorder with playback of up to 96 tracks simultaneously. The Yamaha O1VR/96 digital mixing desk is integrated with a Patch Bay. Other recording gear includes an ADAT compatible via Mark of the Unicorn 2408 mk3 audio interface, and a Unitor 8 midi interface with a Yamaha CRW8424SX CD Writer/Recorder and TV, CD, Video (VHS) and Cassette playback.

In terms of microphones Stone Music has Event PS8's Microphones, Neumann TLM 193, Neumann KM 184 (X2), AKG C3000 (X2), AKG D112, Sennheiser MD421, Shure SM57 (X4) and a Shure SM93. The Outboard & Effect Processors include a Focusrite Platinum Voicemaster (Mic Preamp and Compressor), Behringer Composer

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(Compressor - Limiter), Behringer Autocom (Compressor - Limiter), Behringer Multigate (Multiple Noise Gate), Behringer Suppressor (De-esser), Lexicon LXP 15 II (Reverb), Yamaha SPX 900 (Reverb), Yamaha Rev 7 (Reverb) and a BBE Sonic Maximiser.

Finally the MIDI and Samplers Stone Music use are the SuperNova synth, the Roland RD - 600 Weighted Action 88 Note Controller Keyboard, GigaSampler running on a Pentium II 450 MHZ 256 Meg Ram PC with sample libraries covering the entire orchestra, as well as GigaPiano and others. A Roland JV 1080 with Orchestral, World and Vintage Synth Expansion Cards, Roland JV 2080 fully expanded, Roland M-SE1 String Ensembles, Roland M-OC1 Orchestral, U-220 and JV-880 with a Oberheim Matrix 1000 and Korg 05/W concludes the list of equipment.

c. Development and function of studio

Prior to the location of his studio in Duxbury, off Rivonia road, Michael Hankinson worked from Pretoria. Due to traffic in and around Gauteng becoming increasingly busy and because most of his clients lived in Johannesburg, Michael and crew of two decided to relocate to Johannesburg. At the time of the first interview Michael was planning to add a bed and breakfast component to his studio

> so that people who come and do a lockout, who want to do an album if they come from out of Jo'burg or in Jo'burg and they just don't fancy driving, they can actually stay here, in the heart of Sandton, in a luxury suite with jacuzzi, bar; it's got everything. We've got a full-on gymnasium [in the residential house] and a saltwater swimming pool [in the garden]. So they can really have luxury and convenience, and they can relax and focus on their project.

Stone Productions was one of the most comprehensive studios that I studied. Michael has two staff members (John O' Conner, Adam Howard), although he sees them not as employees but as producers and arrangers who manage their own projects; Michael 'rents' his studio to them. Adam Howard is one of the country's most in demand session musicians and music producers and Stone Music draws on his very diverse musical life. Adam has composed, arranged, produced and performed music for top South-African artists, and has also won a silver Loerie award. Howard Music runs from the Stone Music Production facility.

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Hankinson, besides having the contract for live recording of the Johannesburg Philharmonic Orchestra (JPO) concert seasons, also makes other prestigious live recordings apart from renting scores, organizing entertainment in shopping malls, arranging music (both classical and commercial), organizing small ensembles for corporate functions, launching new products, composing, and conducting. Michael is a guest conductor for the Kwazulu Natal Philharmonic Orchestra and also travels frequently abroad to conduct. He is a sought-after arranger who has done work such as arranging a musical for Cape Town 'State Theatre' [Nico] called the 'Greatest Ever Hits of Broadway', and his compositions include *A Mandela Portrait* (2004) for orchestra and narrator.

Stone Music also creates jingles for commercials (which have won them nine Loerie awards so far), and specialized music such as an anthem for Cell C. The studio is quite diversified in that they can do anything from classical music to kwaito, although they are not really invested in recording pop bands and are more interested in their own productions. Their business includes a small CD printing business and they sell CDs on small scale, for cR35 each. With a huge production facility like Stone Music, it is no wonder that Michael has lost count of how many productions he has done to date.

4.2.5. Kulundu Trading

a. Description

Patrick Schaerer runs his home studio under the name Kulundu Trading although it has a very close business relationship with Inhouse Records. So close in fact that Kulundu Trading's publishing and music production can almost be seen as an extension of Inhouse Records – a sister company. Patrick explained his facility in conjunction with Inhouse Records studios (they have different production amenities and they publish music under different labels according to its style). For this research however, I will describe the production facility on Patrick's premises and when referring to music production or related topics it is with the understanding that Inhouse Records and Kulundu Trading will be included in that discussion.

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Kulundu Trading is based in Patrick Schaerer's home in Olifantsfontein (see Fig 18). Situated on a big property, Kulundu Trading's office and music production facility was built on the previous entertainment area and indoor swimming pool (see Fig 19). In the meantime it has been developed into three sections: an office entered from the driveway, leading through a corridor next to the driveway/garage into an open plan lounge/living area, and a small studio separated from the lounge with steps, fitted with double walls and floating floors. On the right is a door that connects the production room to the sound room, and from there is a door that connects the production facility to the rest of the home (see Figs 20-25). The production room has a window overlooking the sound room with the production desk beneath it. To the left is a big window overlooking the garden. The whole production facility including the office is fitted with floor tiles except for the sound room, which has wooden floors. The sound room is fitted with a big window on the left and sliding doors leading onto the patio. The whole studio is filled with natural light, as are the offices of Kulundu Trading.



Fig 18 Kulundu Trading: Studio view from the garden

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Fig 19 Kulundu Trading: Area before building extensions to accommodate office and studio



Fig 20 Kulundu Trading: Production room view 1

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Fig 21 Kulundu Trading: Production room view 2



Fig 22 Kulundu Trading: Sound room

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Fig 23 Kulundu Trading: Sound room view towards production room



Fig 24 Kulundu Trading: Office view 1

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Fig 25 Kulundu Trading: Office view 2

b. Studio setup

This description will only focus on the equipment in Patrick's home studio. The sound equipment at Inhouse Records is vast because

> We get sponsored a lot of equipment, we purchase a lot of equipment as well, and we use equipment we believe in. So, if we like that piece of equipment for that, we'll use it. A lot of the other studios, shall I say the smaller studios in South Africa are under budget constraints. So they have to use a computer, they have to use a small sound card, they have to use that microphone pre-amp. They have to use that microphone, [be]cause that is all they can afford (Author's interview).

Patrick uses Steinberg Cubase 3 on his Intel Pentium dual core pc loaded with 2 gigs of memory, Windows XP, and Windows Server 2003 respectively as well as dual monitors as his basis for recording. He also has Native instruments Komplete 3 and PARIS as additional software, with a Behringer outboard and processor. His speaker monitors are Yamaha NS10 monitors and he also uses Yamaha PSR keyboards as Midi controllers. When recording live, Patrick makes use only of Audix and AKG microphones.

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c. Development and function of studio

Patrick has been involved in music since a young age, so it was logical for him to start a studio from home. Kulundu Trading is basically a project studio, most of the music productions however are done from Inhouse Records' facilities. Kulundu Trading's studio is used for project work, mastering, or when there is an overflow at the main offices of Inhouse Records. The studio, in conjunction with Inhouse, also caters for backtracks and film, depending on what work comes their way. Patrick's function then, besides doing project work, is as a media broker or an A&R (Artist and Repertoire): 'So I will take a band, I'll develop them, I will get them to a studio, I will get them recorded, and then I will give them a label or get them a distribution deal as well at the same time. So I put the whole deal together and then I take percentage points at different levels'. Kulundu Trading (as does Inhouse Records) specializes in main stream and subgenres. As Patrick explained:

> Say at show you get 6000 people, if you go to a trance festival or something you are going to have 2000 people minimum. So you have got the quantities there, so it is just a question of do you have a product for that market, do you have an [opportunity] in to that market, are you able to advertise to that market, are you able to distribute to that market, and can you successfully operate in that market for a period of time? (Interview)

Kulundu Trading provides all of the above services to its clients, from post-production to sound design, from tracking to final mix-down and mastering. Patrick is also involved in an educational sound engineering programme designed by Inhouse Records, harbouring about forty (fulltime) students per year, and a part-time course which accommodates ten to fifteen students three times a year. This programme has been running since the 1980s. It is not a diploma course, but students do get a certificate and they work on an apprenticeship basis. (See Appendix 2 for a list of training providers.) Productions per year range from between 15 and 50.

A lot of revenue is spent on advertising through magazines, specifically subgenre magazines such as *SA Music*, *Music Maker*, *BMG Magazine*, *Stage Magazine* and *Screen Africa* as well as radio such as campus radio (e.g. RAU and TUKS FM) and local radio stations. Patrick is a drummer and sees his work in the music business more as a lifestyle than a job because of the amount of hours he spends in his office.

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'I am always here. Sunday from 11 till 8 pm I was at the drum show, last night I was working here and [at] 6:30 I went "O shit I was supposed to be at the drum clinic!" Rushed off. I was at the drum clinic till about 8:30. You gotta see all the studio drummers and all the other guys, and you see them and then the next day it all starts again'. Patrick also runs his father's trading business besides being a media broker, producer and drummer, therefore exceeding the 8 hour working day limit in the office that was set for the purpose of this study.

4.2.6. MCM – Marketing Control Management

MCM studios are situated in Sunninghill. Apart from the big advertisement board on the wall, the production facility looks from the outside like a double story home. Upon entering the facilities one is greeted by a secretary behind her desk in the entrance hall. As Mark explained, 'we needed more space so we just kind of built on as we needed to go', the production rooms are connected with various steps and hallways. At the top floor of the studios are the audio visual production rooms and at floor level all the audio rooms (see Fig 26-29). The video room is also on ground level next to the CD production facility, which is the size of two rooms (about 70 square metres). On one end of the production premises is a hallway and door that connects the home to the entrance hall. The studios are very neatly tiled with wooden floors in the production rooms. MCM also have two sound booths and a third booth that also functions as a mini-production room.

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Fig 26 MCM: Production room 1



Fig 27 MCM: Production room 2

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Fig 28 MCM: Manufacturing room with view of screening machine



Fig 29 MCM: View of audio visual room 2

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b. Studio setup

MCM studios have various production rooms including an audio visual production facility. Having been involved with a company called Computer Sound Systems which was the first fully fledged solution provider for Steinberg in this country, Mark's preference for sound recording equipment is still Steinberg based. In Audio room 1 Mark runs a PC Nuendo 3, a Spirit digital desk, Houston controller, a Virus synthesiser JV5080 and Proteus 2000. The microphones he uses are of Shure k7 and Rode NtV. Mark combined the above list with NI and related Virtual synthesizers and Wavelab 6. In addition all plug-ins are Event 20/20. In Audio room 2 Mark runs the same setup except for the Virus Synth, which is a JV2080, and Samson Surround array and Spirit Monitors. For the purpose of this study the Audio Visual room's equipment will not be discussed.

c. Development and function of studio

MCM was previously called Jailhouse Studios. Mark Fourie from MCM explains the history:

> We actually first started out by purchasing some equipment and going into partnership with a company called Jailhouse Studios. And that was a chap by the name of Graham Clifford. We ended up hiring a studio with equipment which was Jailhouse studios, and that was Graham. And then he left to go overseas to London, and so I arranged to buy the name of Jailhouse studios [as] we operated the studios since he'd gone.

Mark was involved in selling Steinberg products and setting up home studios for producers. He installed close to forty studios in SA and was therefore especially interested in starting his own studio. Mark also performed as a singer and guitar player of one of the first commercial bands (FM Strangers) to do techno and live dance music in South Africa in the early 90's together with other bands such as 'Walk this Way', 'Slam Factory' and 'Dr Victor and the Rasta Rebels'. However, Mark does not perform commercially any longer.

MCM studios are especially involved in releasing products featuring Gospel choirs, which are recorded in Harrismith in an MCM production facility and mastered in

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Johannesburg. In addition, they offer a wonderful package deal for artists; by recording their product for free with the understanding that they have to purchase the product for resale at the PPD (Product, Price, Dealer) price from MCM, who manufactures the product themselves (see Fig 28). In addition to the recording services, MCM is also geared to manufacture music videos at an affordable rate and also functions as a TV add, jingle and radio add facility. As the owner of the studio Mark is very involved in the creative side of productions and the basic running of the studio, and lets his engineers and staff take care of music productions. They are compensated with a basic salary and also work on a commission basis. MCM does not advertise as all their work is generated through word of mouth.

4.2.7. Sean Butler Studio

a. Description

Sean Butler Studio is situated in his Townhouse complex in Olivedale. Upon entering the house you go through a very light and airy open-plan lounge and kitchen, and a corridor to the left connects the studio to the house. The double garage has been turned into the studio with a corridor that serves as a small entrance room (about 4 square metres), a sound room to the right of the entrance hall and the production room leading out of the corridor, all carpeted. The production room has a window view of the sound room, the latter being about 9 square metres. The production room is about 16 square metres furnished with a couch. The L-shaped workstation is in front of the sound room window, on which there are two computer screens and a mixing desk. Two reference monitors are facing the desk. On the left is another small computer with three racks of keyboards fitted snugly next to it. Against the back wall next to the three rack keyboards is another keyboard with a couch beside it. The sound booth has a big window and a couple of microphones, amps, music stand and a bass-trap against the wall (see Figs 30-36.)

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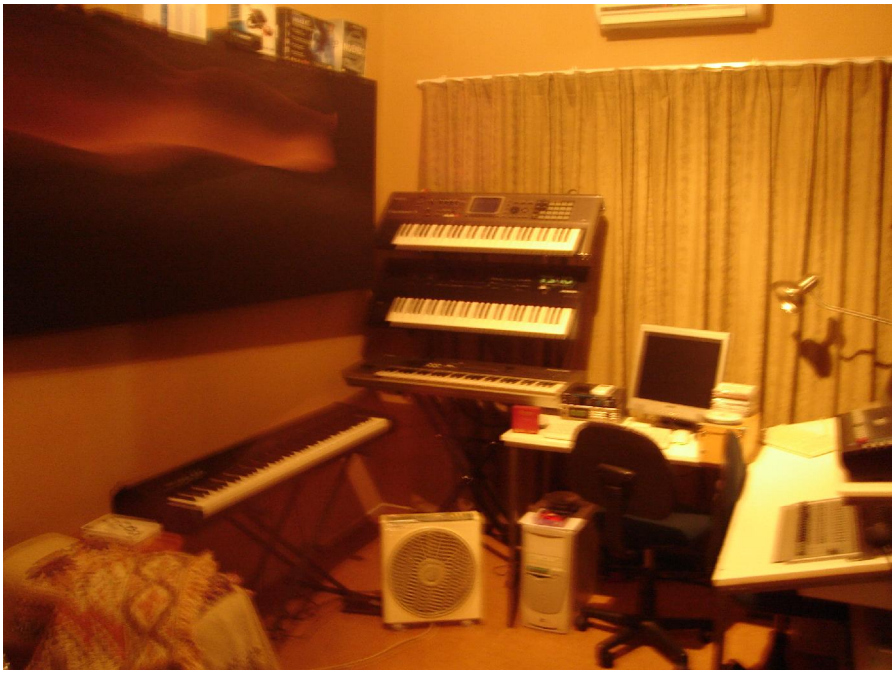


Fig 30 Sean Butler Studio: Production room

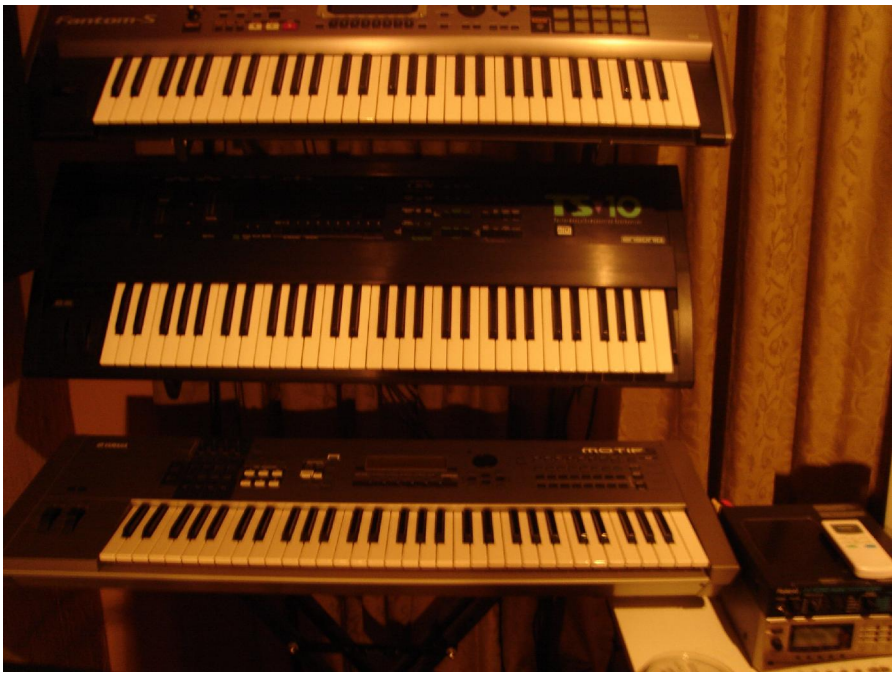


Fig 31 Sean Butler Studio: Close-up of keyboards

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Fig 32 Sean Butler Studio: Production room desk

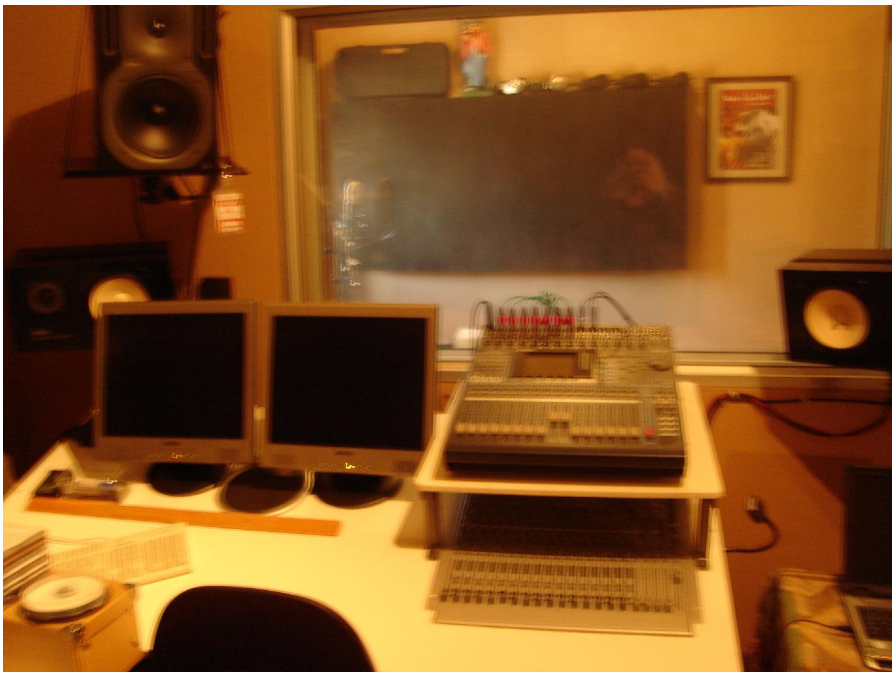


Fig 33 Sean Butler Studio: View from production room into sound booth

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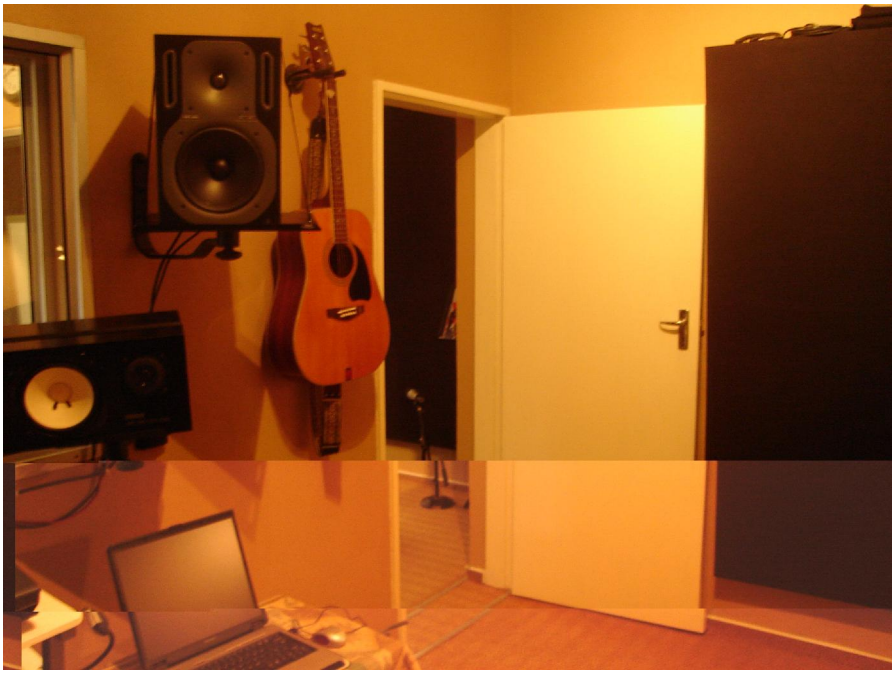


Fig 34 Sean Butler Studio: View from computers in production room leading into entrance hall



Fig 35 Sean Butler Studio: View of sound booth

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Fig 34 Sean Butler Studio: Sound booth as seen from window, with Sean Butler

b. Studio setup

Sean Butler runs Nuendo 1.6 (a Steinberg product), which fulfils his production requirements and is easy to operate. He has two Behringer Truth speakers (B2031) and two Yamaha NS1000 and NS10 speakers. Sean also uses a Mosfet pioneer amp and Denon amp and a Luna M Audio, Behringer B2 Pro and Rhode NTK mic. In addition he uses Samson drum kit and Samson Co2 mics. He is quite fond of his Behringer (16 channel) and Yamaha O1v96 (16 channel) mixing consoles, and also has 4 keyboards: a Roland RD 100, a Yamaha Motiv, A Roland Fantom FS and an Ensoniq TS 100. Sound modules include the Sound Canvas SC8800d and Roland JV 1010. Sean owns six pairs of AKG K55 headphones and a LTO headphone pre-amp.

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c. Development and function of studio

Sean is a full time freelance musician, arranger and producer. He began his studio in 2002, and prior to that he worked for Paragon Pictures, Mainframe Pictures and David Gresham Records - The David Gresham Record Company is South Africa's largest independent record label, having celebrated its 30th anniversary in 2002. Sean studied light music at Pretoria Technikon and has always been interested in music production and studio work. When he began his studio his intention was to record his own music, but due to his previous association with Paragon Pictures and many theatre colleagues, he has maintained a substantial client base, which continues to go from strength to strength. Percentage-wise he does about 60% albums, 20% voiceovers, 10% backing tracks and some television work. Apart from studio work, Sean also does musical directing and performs as a vocalist and pianist at the Barnyard theatre group. He has done many productions: over thirty CD productions, five television shows, two feature movies and forty stage productions. Sean works with well-known South African artists such as Ian von Memerty, Casper de Vries and Nataniel. He never advertises, and gets all his work by word of mouth.

4.2.8. Mugu Studio

a. Description of studio

Mugu studios is situated in Westdene right behind owner Peter Auret's residential home. From the street side the property is completely closed off with a high wall and one would never know that there is a four-room studio hidden behind it. Peter and his wife bought the house specifically with the studio in mind. The studio used to be a garden cottage, and Peter has since built on to the studio to have more sound rooms and a bigger production facility. As one walks along the driveway and across the back garden the studio appears with a veranda in front leading into the control room. The control room has upon entrance a big black leather couch (which Peter classes under equipment!) Behind the couch is a big workstation and chair facing (interestingly enough) with the back towards the couch and the sound rooms. The sound processors are in a racking cabinet to the right with a big mixing desk on the left, with a door next to it leading into the second sound room.

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On the right on sound room 2 is sound room 1 fitted with a basin/kitchenette. On the left of sound room 2 and also the furthest away from the production room is sound room 3 with a grand piano, separated by big glass wooden doors. All the rooms have carpeting with the exception of sound room 3 that has a brand new wooden floor upon which the Yamaha piano is placed (see Figs 37-42).



Fig 37 Mugu Studio: Production room

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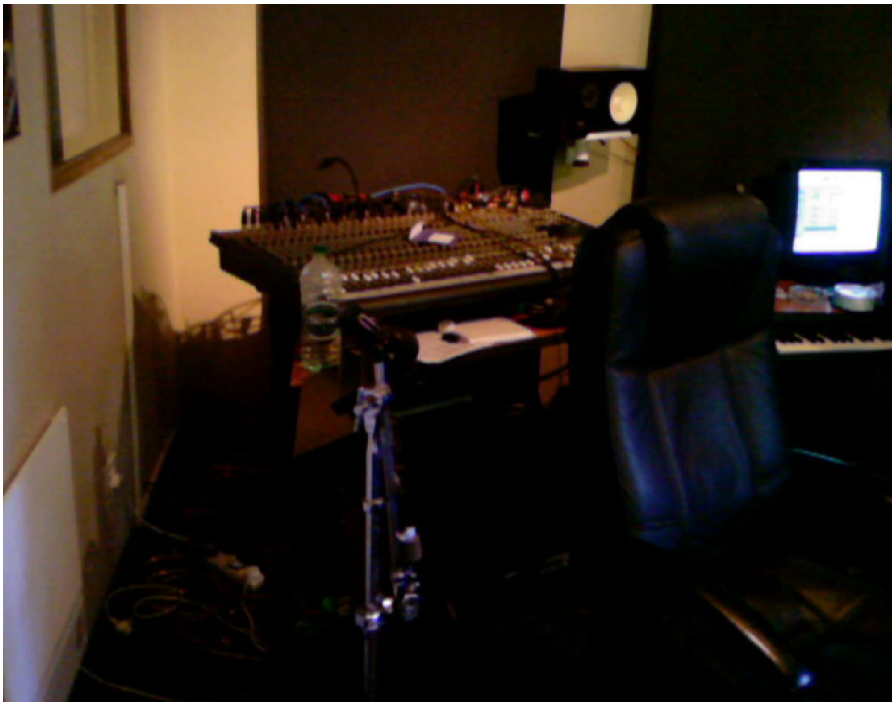


Fig 38 Mugu Studio: View of production room's mixing desk



Fig 39 Mugu Studio: Sound booth 1

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Fig 40 Mugu Studio: View of sound booth 1 with view of sound booth 2



Fig 41 Mugu Studio: View of sound booth 2 with view of grand piano



Fig 42 Mugu Studio: Sound booth 3/kitchen

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b. Studio setup

Peter's studio is equipped as a fully digital studio. He owns a Mackie 32.8 and 16.04 Console and Yamaha NS-10m as well as a Spirit Absolute Zero monitors. Peter has a range of microphones: five Shure SM57, two Rode NT1, two Shure 16AM along with a CAD E200, AKG D112, Crown PZM and a Sennheizer Snare Mic. The outboard contains an Art RxR Reverb unit, CS-2 Compressor, Aphex Easy Rider Compressor, Focusrite Tone, Boss SE50 Multi FX, Alesis D4 Drum Module, Lexicon Vortex FX, Roland JV-90, Roland R-8, Alesis SR-16 and Clark Teknik DI Box. The Pentium computer is running Sonar 4 (previously Cakewalk), which, according to Peter, is not very popular but still his preferred choice, and from time to time other software packages such as Reason. He is also the owner of two drum kits: a 6 piece Pearl Session Series and a 5 piece Tama Artstar Es 1966, plus a Roland JV-90 Keyboard and a Roland JC120 Guitar Amp.

c. Development and function of studio

At the time of the interview Peter Auret wanted to change the name of his studio to 'Sumu' Sound, as he felt that 'Mugu' was a bit juvenile. Starting in his mother's garage, Peter has come a long way in developing his own professional studio. Being a drummer himself he wanted to record his own band since school and starting a studio was the result of his lifelong vision. A big chunk of Peter's time goes into freelancing as a drummer, besides playing in his own band Element 3 and performing regularly with Watershed.

Before going into producing and funding his own facility, Peter studied graphic design because 'I am quite visual and I think that is really where my talent is, it is not necessarily music'. Peter is not fond of doing backtracks, and focuses his creative energies on full CD productions and the occasional jingle. He would however, like to get into film-music and has done approximately twenty commercial albums. As a drummer Peter has invested time in learning a few things on the keyboard in order to make him a better producer. He has worked with a few big names in the (Afrikaans) music industry such as Steve Hofmeyr and the late Janita Claassen. He has never advertised to date but acquires clients who respond to his website.

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4.2.9. Edwin Randall Studio

a. Description of studio

Edwin Randall Music Inc. is located in Edwin Randall's Westdene home. The entrance leads into his kitchen and immediately left is an entrance to the studio, which was probably intended as a dining room. The whole studio consists of one room in the style of the rest of the house with wooden floors and pressed ceilings. There is a window on the left as you enter the studio, and the work area is a long table with a keyboard forming an L. Edwin Randall has no sound booth. The lounge, which is just behind the studio, has a beautiful Steinway piano. The walls of the studio have instruments, books and CDs stacked against them along with posters of shows in which Edwin has featured.

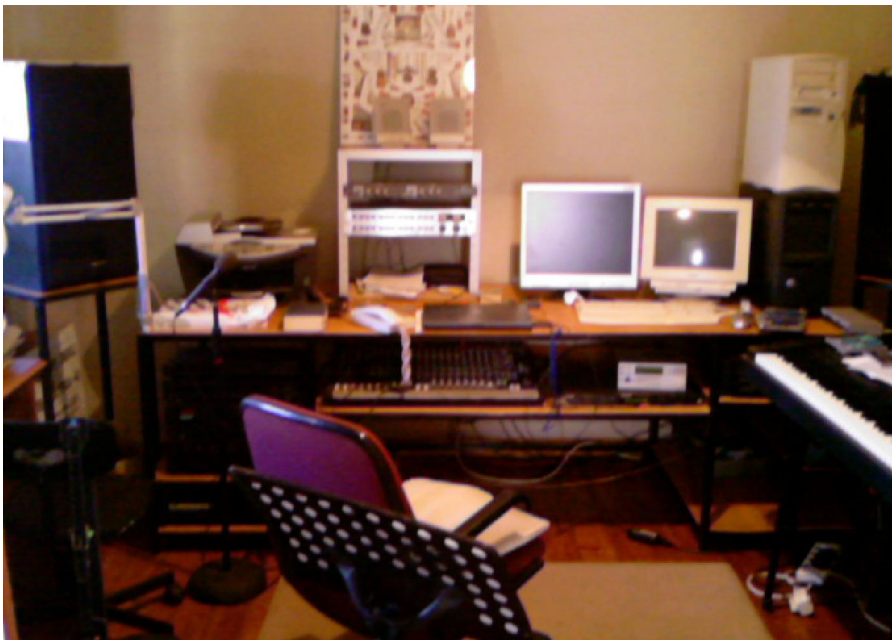


Fig 43 Randall Music Inc: Production room viewed from kitchen

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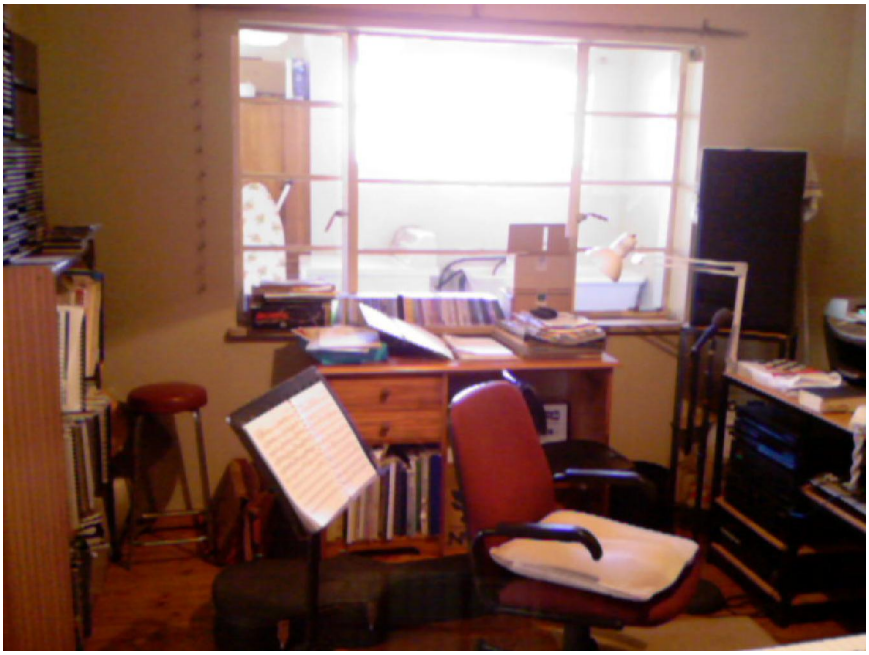


Fig 44 Randall Music Inc: View of production room from lounge side



Fig 45 Randall Music Inc: Production room midi controller

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Fig 46 Randall Music Inc: View of lounge with grand piano

b. Studio setup

The core of Edwin's studio is his Pentium(R) CPU 2.80 GHz loaded with Cubase SX 3, Sibelius 4 and Wavelab 5. He also uses a M-Audio Delta sound-card and Behringer 2442 mixer, with a Techniques amp and speakers and dual screen card. Edwin uses the Roland RD 600 as a midi controller as well as a Korg i30 and Ensoniq Sampler Keyboard. In addition he has the Yamaha MU 128 and Mr Rack Ensoniq modules. Extra gear that is used from time to time includes the Behringer Vintager (vacuum tube), a DAT recorder, Rode studio microphone and Behringer Powerplay headphones.

c. Development and function of studio

Edwin is a multi-instrumentalist and works as a full-time freelancer performing in shows such as Barnyard shows and productions in theatres in addition to private functions. He started his studio after he returned from Italy in 2000, first in Ermelo where he worked as a teacher, then in Pretoria about three years later, and finally in Johannesburg. Owing to the nature of his work (making backtracks, composing or arranging) creating a studio was 'sort of inevitable. I always had to have a way of storing stuff and making backups and printing stuff'. Edwin has also made two full

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CD productions, but has shifted his focus to making a name as a performer in the Johannesburg area. Most of his studio work (about 70%) is spent making backtracks, and about 30% on arranging and composing. He finds making backtracks tedious: ‘it can be a bit tiring sometimes, it’s a mindless job’. Edwin has never advertised himself as a recording artist but has always managed to find work by word of mouth.

4.2.10. B-Sharp Studio

a. Description

B-Sharp Studio is in Boksburg on the East Rand, where John Paul de Stefani (or JP as many people call him) has turned his garage into a studio. The garage is near his house but still far enough to ensure a separate working space. The studio has an entrance door that leads past a staircase to the top floor into the production or control room. The production room is the same length as the sound booth (the length of a double garage) and is about 3 metres wide. The sound room is about 5 metres wide with a raised platform in the far left corner (made from wood intended for a drum kit). A door separates the production or control room with a double glass window looking into the booth. The studio has tile flooring with scattered patches of carpet and no windows, but due to the size of the studio one doesn’t feel claustrophobic. There is also a door leading to a bathroom from the control room. There is one main desk with a computer and small keyboard and racking cabinet with effects units. No sign of a big mixing desk as B-Sharp studio is an entirely digital operating facility (see Figs 47-51).

JP was in the middle of construction work at the time of the first interview, adding a guesthouse on the second floor of the garage, directly above the studio. The guesthouse has an open plan lounge and kitchen with a small bathroom and bedroom to cater for bands that might want to rent it during production. JP also rents it at a monthly rate in order to cut costs and add convenience to bands that might be travelling from far.

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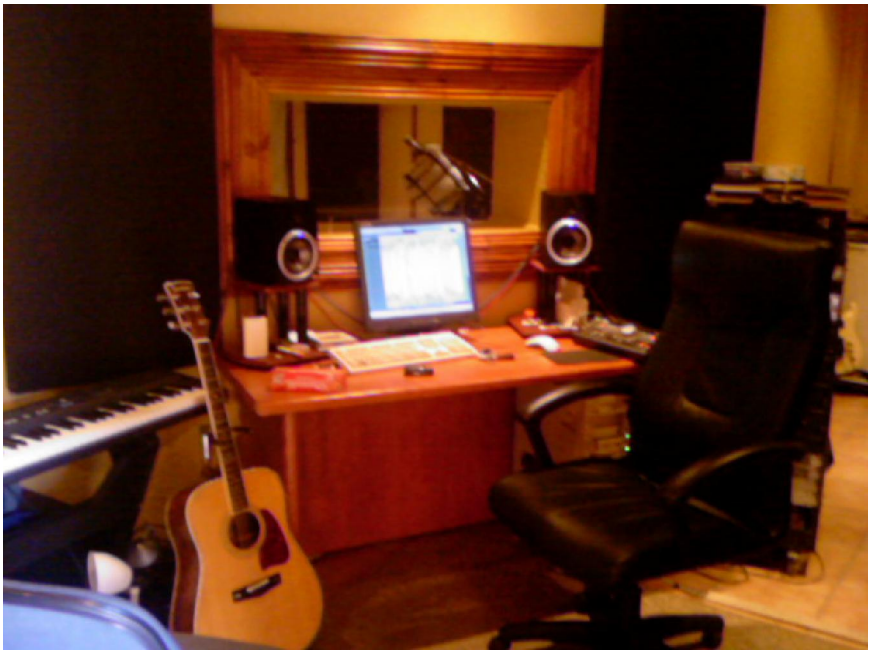


Fig 47 B-Sharp Studio: Production room with window to sound room

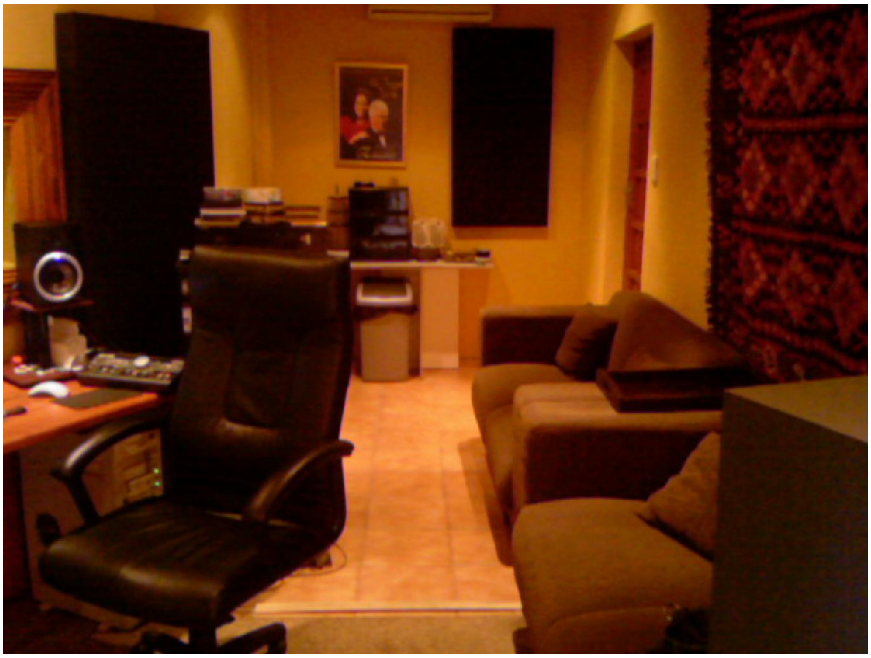


Fig 48 B-Sharp Studio: Production room view 2

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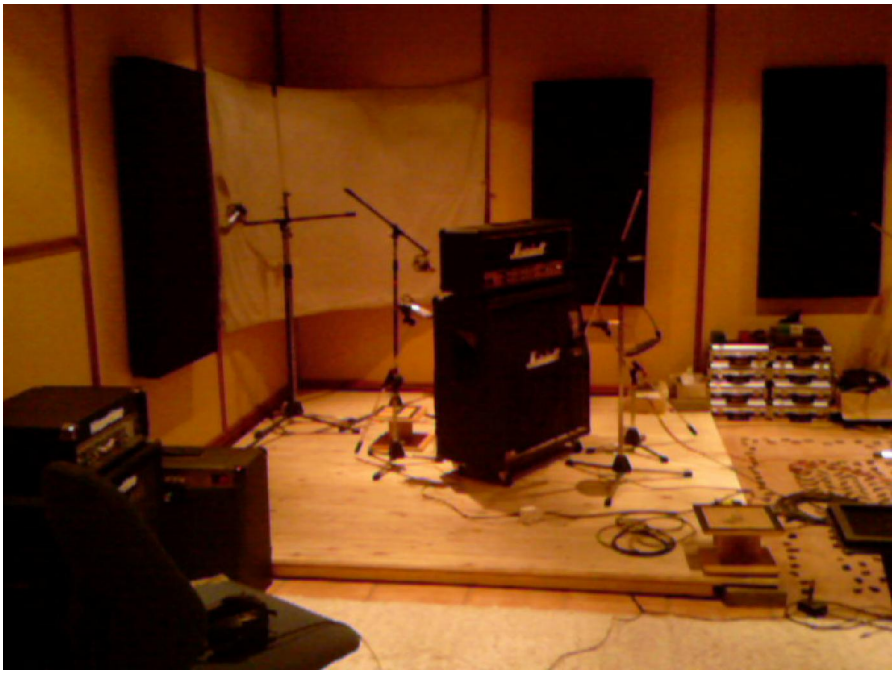


Fig 49 B-Sharp Studio: Sound room with platform for drum kit

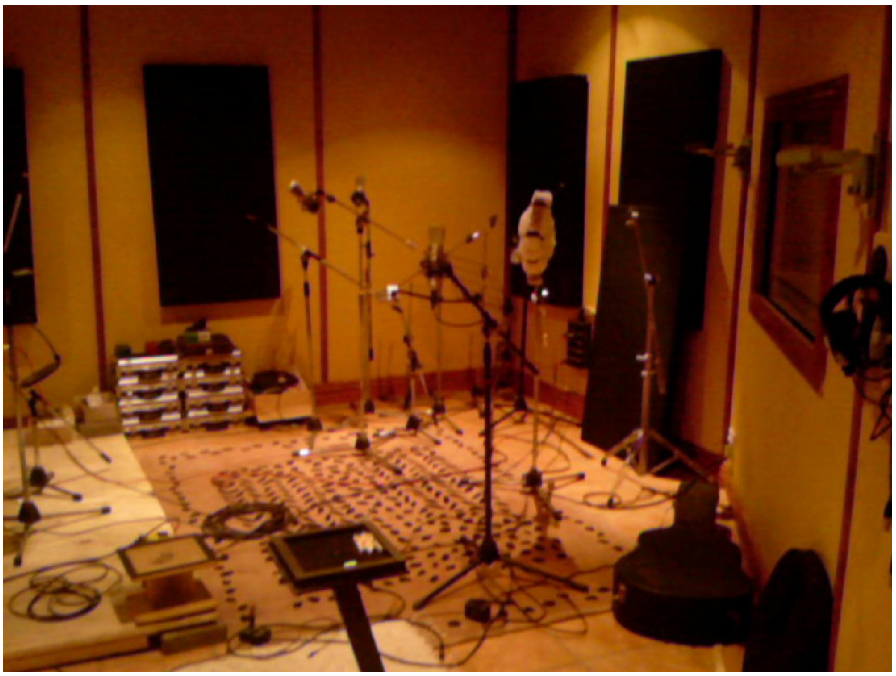


Fig 50 B-Sharp Studio: Sound room view 2

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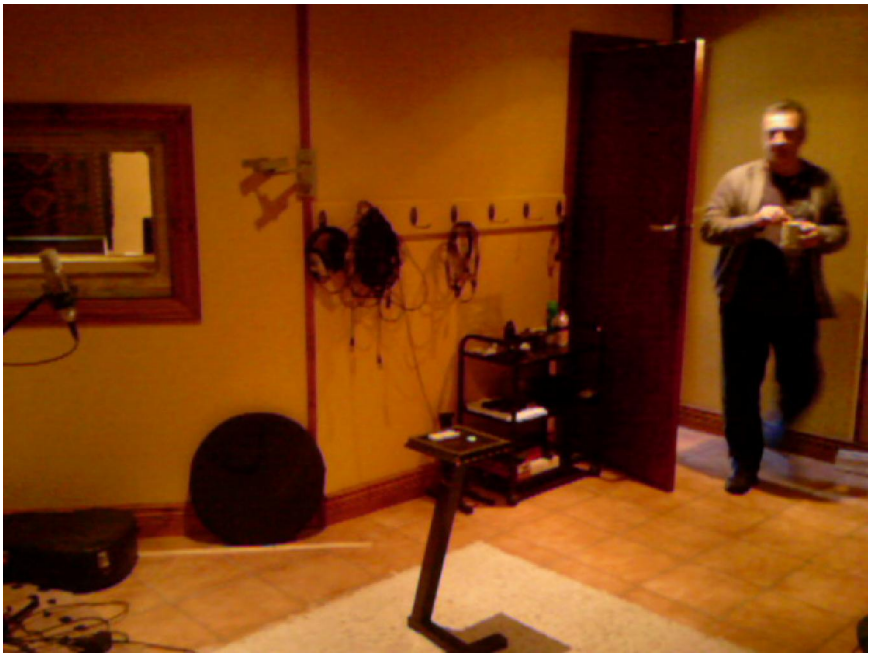


Fig 51 B-Sharp Studio: Sound room with JP in doorway

b. Studio setup

JP believes in Samplitude Professional as his preferred software for recording, and plenty of plug-ins. 'I've actually got two full computers at the back with full on plug-ins, but that is like all the vintage gear, that's why you don't see much here, its all digital'. He owns a full range of UAD Vintage external powered plug-ins as well as Waves, Wavearts, Antares, 4xUAD-1 DSP cards and various others in Magma PCI expansion unit. JP's hardware includes a Stereo Art Pro tube pre-amplifiers, Stereo Aphex 107 tube pre-amps, Delta 1010 I/O sound cards, Behringer Eurorack Pro line mixers (for monitoring) and a Mackie Big Knob Sansamp effects units. He is currently running from Event monitors and LCDs, and he also has M Audios surround speakers. His monitors are BAS 20-20 Event powered monitors, Event sub-woofer and M-Audio BX5 powered monitors. JP uses a combination of Beyer M740 condenser mics, Beyer M420/ M422/ M201 and M 260 ribbon mics, NT2 condenser mics, Behringer B1 and B2-Pro condenser mics and a Shure SM91 and SM57 mic, depending on what instrument he is recording. He is saving up to upgrade his computer screen to a 30 inch and to get a midi controller.

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c. Development and function of studio

B-Sharp studio is geared for rock and pop bands and the booth is big enough to accommodate a whole band for a live recording. The guesthouse on the second floor is a recent addition and quite a luxurious one: 'We have a little kitchen and a shower, all the facilities that they might need, they have got DSTV as well, a snooker table, TV games, you know, if they get bored'. The guesthouse can accommodate up to 6 people and has a quiet, relaxing atmosphere. JP has done several hundred productions for bands, and has more than twenty years' experience in the recording field. He has set his own working hours from 11 am to 7 pm and rarely works overtime. All his work involves recording bands, JP resigned his job with TOMS (That Other Music Shop) over two years ago in order to dedicate his life to being a full-time producer; and he doesn't perform as a musician any more.

4.4. Summary

There are a number of things these studios have in common, despite their differences in size, layout, and equipment. The majority of the studios are used for CD production. All of them are literally 'at home', either in the house itself or in an outside building on the premises. All of them use computers to record, with analogue equipment such as keyboards and sound-processors connected to the PC. The use of a PC versus the use of a Mac seems to be a personal choice in all cases. Every case study has a preference for particular software which the owners have come to through trial and error, to achieve the result they want (and the range of software used is quite surprising). Most of them outsource mastering of their products, with the exception of Stone Music Productions and Kulundu Trading. All of them have electronic keyboards and reference monitors, and all except Chris Harper Studios and Edwin Randall Music have a separate sound booth. Six of the ten case studies (Stone, Power Music, B-Sharp, Kulundu Trading, Sean Butler and Penmac) have one sound-room/booth with a window above the production desk for viewing the sound-room/booth and the production desk not necessarily facing towards it.

It is significant that all of the owners of these studios came to studio work via performance: this for me is a very significant part of the reason for their success, and

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the high artistic quality of their outputs. They all were – and some still are – professional players, and several of them have professional music qualifications as well. Kulundu and Inhouse offer a very comprehensive set of services to their clients as Stone Music does, while the other studios specialize more or less in one area such as recording.

In Chapter 5, 6, and 7, I will explore and in interpret the various technological, economic, and sociological functions these studios perform.

CHAPTER 5: TECHNOLOGICAL FUNCTION OF SMALL INDEPENDENT RECORDING STUDIOS

> Personal computers have carved a niche in the music world so deep that it is hard to imagine any musician oblivious to their presence (Waters 1989, ix).

5.1. Technology as use

In this chapter I tease out some of the issues that came up during the interviews about technology, chiefly the preference for different kinds of hardware and software, and opinions on how they are useful. In Chapter 2 I gave some of the historical background to the development of recording technologies, but I now explore their application to my case studies. For a broad working definition of music technology I use the one developed by Chats Devroop (2002). He describes it as ' that part of the technological field which requires the application of engineering, scientific and music knowledge and methods combined with technical and music skills to music activities', adding that it 'lies in the occupational spectrum at the end closest to the musician' (5).

The emphasis here is very strongly on technology as a tool used by musicians and lying close to the actual work of music, even though the field of technology as a whole may be much larger and more complex. This definition is borne out in practice in all the case studies I researched, and the emphasis on *use* ('application') is clearly what has led each studio to be so different from the next, and to managers employing such different kinds of hardware and especially software according to their experience and preference. Most of them also have quite a range of technologies to cater for the different functions of their studio.

5.2. Analogue and digital environments

In all the case studies I researched, I came to realize that although all of them use some analogue equipment, they all record digitally, or turn an analogue signal into a digital one. Malcolm Finlay was careful to define the so-called distinction between an analogue and a digital studio: 'a lot of people understand a digital studio to be a MIDI based studio, which is not strictly true; well, its not true at all. A digital studio can be

MIDI and analogue recording, digitizing an analogue signal' (Author's interview 2005). Most studios in my case studies still use analogue desks but these are also hooked up to digital software, and although they are analogue desks they become an extension of the digital environment, as in Chris Harper's case: 'I am using a mix-analogue and digital Behringer desk. I am exclusively a digital studio. I have never worked with analogue' (Authors interview 2006).

This is symptomatic of our times. The 'big break' or catalyst for independent studios came with precisely the movement from analogue to digital recording, and this remains an enormously influential factor. As early as 1989 personal computers were 'standard equipment in recording studios and music publishing companies', and digital sequencing software was available for PC with 'levels of sophistication and price ranging from those suitable for beginners to professional products' (Waters 1989, x).

The shift to digital recording and the use of self-help manuals, however, brought about another advantage – or maybe a disadvantage: the notion that an aspiring producer does not need to be trained, either musically or technically. Most software programmes are learned by the use of a manual, apparently enabling the 'illiterate' studio user to become literate overnight. Sequencing, in particular, apparently obviated the need for musical literacy. As Miall noted already in 1990, sequencing packages were

> a composing tool for non-literate musicians. The latter term is not used in any way pejoratively. It refers to those musicians who have no use for traditional music notation, nor the concepts that arise from it, in their music – and such musicians are in the majority. These often highly complex and expensive software packages, running on microcomputers such as Atari ST, IBM PC, and Apple Macintosh, offer elaborate composition tool-boxes which are currently being used by a very large market of player/composers (154).

5.3. Hardware preferences

In my interviews I asked what the priorities were in terms of equipment when the producer started out. All my informants' bases for recording were 'to have a decent computer, enough memory [and] enough hard drive space. Processing power to record

audio and to actually process samples and to have really [a] decent soundcard. To basically record good quality audio and to have enough inputs to record instruments, and to have a decent pair of monitors' (Author's interview 2006 Ronald Powell). In addition every person had a specific preference for certain recording software. Power Music and Stone Music use Logic combined with an Apple Mac; Harper Music, Edwin Randall and Kulundu Trading use Cubase; MCM uses only software from Steinberg as does Sean Butler (a programme from Steinberg called Nuendo); Penmac uses Digital Performer; B-Sharp uses Samplitude Professional and Mugo studios uses Sonar.

5.4. Software preferences

This preference for software can sometimes become a point of heated debate between passionate studio owners. In every interview I came across strong opinions on the software of choice and even advice as to what software to avoid. Chris Harper's view of Cubase is that '[it] is very good if you want to programme fast. Cubase has got a good internal memory programme and compatible with MIDI. The audio side is also quite good if you get to know the shortcuts'. Unfortunately some software packages can interfere with other software programmes, as Chris Harper complains in relation to Cubase: 'I would like to use [Giga Sampler] more because the samples are so good, but the programme doesn't interface very well with Cubase. So I am actually in the situation to get two PCs and slave the one to the other because Giga sampler's sound samples are huge'. Even if one wants to upgrade to a different software package for example Logic, it might be problematic due to the incompatibility between programmes. Chris Harper has encountered this problem.

> Protools is the favourite because it is very stable, a lot more stable than Cubase. The main reason why I stick to Cubase is because all my files of the last ten years are in Cubase. So if I record something or someone wants to find something or delete something or edit, if I had to change my format to say Logic, you have similar problems in Cubase, and also Protools is also recommended with a Mac. You can manage it on a PC, and it is very stable as well, but ideally it should be the Mac (Authors interview 2006).

Jean-Paul from B-Sharp on the other hand has not found Cubase helpful: 'I use Samplitude Professional. Not Cubase. Definitely not Cubase' (Authors interview Jean

Paul 2007). Malcolm Finlay from Penmac av said that his choice of software was determined by its flexibility, not its reputation.

> I can use external boxes from a number of different manufacturers which means that I have that flexibility to use whichever I O [in-out] boxes I want to, upgrade to whatever I want to without buying the specific Protools gear. Some people believe Protools is better. My personal opinion is, the only reason is, that it costs more. The end objective is to end up with a good product and if you can get the same product out of a tin can who cares what you make to get the product. The final evaluation is the end product itself, not the tools you use to achieve it (Ibid).

Another advantage of technology is that you can interlink studios if you do happen to have more than one recording room: 'In Randburg (at Inhouse Records) all the studios are interpatched. You can patch from any studio to any recording room to any other studio. So if you wanna use an effects unit that is in Dark Angel room 1 and you are sitting in Dark Angel 2 you can patch it' (Author's interview Patrick Schaerer 2006).

Music software packages extend beyond recording sound to music notation software such as Finale and Sibelius, which still require a level of literacy, but do make it possible for composers to work on home computers for high-quality score preparation, extracting parts, adding parts, and most importantly, for playing back compositions in real time.

5.5. Uses of software

For composers of film music Apple Mac is especially good at importing visuals so that the composer can view footage and compose in real time to a split second: a major advance in television and film production. There are numerous recording and sampling programmes available specifically designed for digital musicians, composers and producers – professional or otherwise. These include Logic Pro, Cubase, Fruity Loops, Sampletude, Gigastudio and Protools. The increasing affordability of these programmes, even in South Africa, means that the home-studio owner as well as the studio-pro can use them indiscriminately. As we have seen in Chapter 4, most of my case studies use several kinds of software.

Software technology is not simply ‘there’ – passively waiting to be used. It has achieved a high degree of agency, playing ‘a significant role in shaping the evolution of popular music, with each new development allowing the emergence of “new” sound’ (Shuker 2002, 296). This active feature of technology can be seen in the number of effects that can be added to songs, creating new styles such as hip-hop and house music. Sophisticated technology, however, needs quite sophisticated users to get the most benefit from it. It can be seen erroneously as a way of creating something out of nothing. As one of my interviewees put it, ‘I get some people that will say “I wanna make an album, and I have got an idea”, and they will borrow a keyboard, bring it in, play five notes, and then ask me to loop that for 10 minutes, and then do some kind of singing over the top you know, and that’s considered to be music’ (Malcolm Finlay).

But new technology has generally provided innovation, not only in popular but also in classical (art) music. As early as 1987 the opera *Countdown; an opera for the nuclear age* by Christopher Yavelow was premiered: the first opera ever to be composed and published on a personal computer, with libretto written by Laura Harrington. An Apple Mac computer and a Kurzweil 250 Digital Music Workstation were used during the creation of the work: ‘The Kurzweil was used as an “orchestra in a box” or “orchestral sketchpad” and new recordings of the fully orchestrated music were produced daily. The Macintosh was used to capture performance (MIDI sequence) data, using *Mark of the Unicorn’s Performer* software to control the Kurzweil’ (www.yavelow.com). The opera was subsequently published on the net.

The internet fuelled the growth in technological change and it certainly played a big part in music technology as it did in other areas. Symes even proclaimed the World Wide Web as ‘transforming the nature of the record culture, particularly its textual dimensions. Most of the companies associated with the record industry now own websites’ (Symes 2004; 250). In addition the internet hosts websites for aspiring indies (listed in Appendix 3), provide upgrades for registered users of software (e.g. Sibelius), supply websites where music can be downloaded (for a minimum fee or for free in some cases), assists registered users of software with a helpdesk, and even grants the user MIDI files for songs, some of them for free. Some artists or indie

labels (e.g. Inhouse) even use the internet as a means of publishing music, music clips, and videos.

Technology also has the capacity

> to access information at an enormous velocity and reduce the temporal hiatus between the demand for information and its supply. In effect, digital technologies are producing a culture increasingly characterized by instantaneity, in which previous mediating forces such as the time required for production and the distance from the site of production are insignificant factors in the acquisition of musical commodities. Such technologies are furthering the annihilation of time and space, which were central components of the postmodern condition (Symes 2004, 250).

It is interesting however to note how little emphasis my interviewees placed on the idea of 'instantaneity'. It may have been because I didn't specifically ask them about this, and clearly time is a critical component when one runs an independent studio and it came up as an aspect of homeworking. Everyone clearly felt as if they were working under a certain pressure, but one did not have the sense of frenzy and time-space collapse that Symes refers to.

5.6. Technology and the studio environment

Home studios are certainly a postmodern phenomenon in the sense of occupying minimum space and maximum ease of use. Interviewees such as Sean Butler had his control room and sound booth in a space of a single garage. In fact, without a sound booth one could easily fit a whole digital studio in the space of an ordinary office desk (and probably there are thousands of South Africans who do just this). The Edwin Randall and Chris Harper studios consist of only one room without divisions between the work and recording stations. With the exception of Stone Productions, B-Sharp and MCM all the case studies had sound rooms less than 9 square metres. The days of big mixing desks and huge production workstations for the IRS passed when digital technology became an inseparable part of daily living.

Although sound booths/rooms are part of the physical space or environment, their function is technical in nature. As Ludwig Bower states on his website: 'Software can do a lot, but a bad [sound] room will sound bad – no matter what you do with the

software' (www.onebigroom.co.za, accessed 1.8.07). In all of my case studies with the exception of Edwin Randall and Chris Harper, the studio featured a sound booth or sound room. In all eight cases the sound recording room(s)/booth(s) were carefully designed as to create a balance between acoustics and noise level. It was significant to note that all of them were completely different in terms of flooring, walling and instrumentation, although all of them had a window view from the production room. The obvious concern, in every case, was to seal off outside noise so it didn't leak into the microphones, and to make the acoustics as good as possible for the players within the confines of available space.

A disadvantage of digitally driven studios is that today's technology is outdated and unusable tomorrow. Most studios upgrade every few months to stay on top of things, even if it is something small like a plug-in. It becomes like a fetish: the more equipment you have, the more you desire the latest upgrade. As Ronald Powell remarked: 'every month I add new equipment to the studio because music grows so quickly and new sounds come out everyday. You need to keep up with the industry and you need to constantly upgrade to stay with where music is going' (Author's interview 2005). The other side of the coin is the advantage that sound equipment or technology can easily and sometimes cost-effectively be upgraded and most of this kind of gear is also quite easily available.

Flat frequency response monitors were the choice of all the producers I interviewed, ranging across Samson 65 A Resolve (Power Music Entertainment), Alesis (Harper Music), Yamaha X 10 (Kulundu Trading), Fostex (Penmac), Event monitors and M Audios (B Sharp Studios). The theory behind flat response monitors is that 'if you can get your mixes sounding good on those, they will sound brilliant on any thing else' (Author's interview Chris Harper 2006). Malcolm Finlay also stresses their importance: 'Critical, critical, critical is you must have a decent set of monitoring speakers. You must have monitoring speakers that give you a very flat response' (Author's interview 2006).

Apart from the independent studio owner, universities in South Africa such as Witwatersrand and Pretoria have also invested in the luxury of technology on hand, by setting up mock studios and work spaces where the principles of recording

engineering and digital production is taught. The recording equipment purchased by tertiary institutions is also used from time to time to record concerts and events. And as Waters says, the technology can take one on journeys way beyond music: ‘significant numbers of academic musicians have become involved in a variety of computer-based aspects of music, and have then found the need to venture into other disciplines (Waters 1989, ix).

5.7. Summary

Almost all small independent studios in my study make use of digital equipment to record. Easy and accessible use of software has made it possible for anyone to record their own productions, and this became possible when digital software packages compatible with most PCs came about. Apart from music recording, one is also able to obtain software for scoring and audio visual work. The internet has made this transition easier with material related to recording being published on the net. The small amount of space that a digital studio occupies has further paved the way for this phenomenon to develop. Software can be easily updated even from the internet, making it accessible to other disciplines and institutions as an aid.

CHAPTER 6: ECONOMIC FUNCTION OF INDEPENDENT RECORDING STUDIOS

In this chapter I explore issues regarding the economic workings of the IRS, exploring the methodological perspective on economic industries and relating it to the home studio. I first look at the economic impact of the major industries and the financial interplay from a socio-economic viewpoint, then at the financial benefits and risks that the IRS carries to the owner and other personnel involved in the recording process.

6.1. The growth of economic factors

The economic impact of the major record companies grew exponentially as I indicated in Chapter 2: the phonograph phenomenon developed into a profit-making medium in the entertainment industry by means of coin-operated machines from 1889 onwards. With the improvement of pre-recorded cylinders developed in the early 1900s home record sales rocketed: 'while in 1897 only about 500 000 records had been sold in the United States, by 1899 this number had reached 2.8 million, and continued to rise' (Shuker 2002, 219).

Economic growth in the late nineteenth and twentieth century made way for the establishment of big financially driven companies such as the record companies, who made themselves and their artists fabulously rich.

> [In 1996], after every major US label had been bidding for the band REM re-signed to Warner Brothers, securing the biggest record contract in history – an estimated $80 million; UK 'girl group' the Spice Girls' 'Wannabe' (Virgin) became the most successful debut single of all time selling 4.8 million copies worldwide; and the value of the UK music industry hit a new peak of 1.1 billion pounds, while the value of the total recorded music market in the United States was $12.5 billion (Shuker 2002, viii).

The emergence of the independent record label (due mainly to developments in technology, as already discussed), was in part an attempt to buy into this highly profitable business. In fact, major recording companies became concerned with economic exploitation of their superstars (as mentioned in 2.3.3) neglecting to invest

and enabling indies to gain a bigger share of the market. However, as Mark Botha from MCM pointed out, the major company is concerned with profit regardless of the product; rather than with the process of the making the product thus creating an inexpensive product by means of outsourcing is where the 'buck started' for the indies.

> Businesses are now competing globally and traditional barriers between industries are breaking down. To cope with these and other changes and achieve superior performance, business leaders are moving towards new business paradigms that allow their companies to work more closely together with their traditional and new business partners in order to adapt to the rapidly changing marketplace (Steyn 2005, 2).

6.2. Outsourcing

Outsourcing – 'the practise of handing over the planning, management and operation of certain functions to an independent third party' (Steyn 2005, 83) – is necessary because performing all business functions inside a company has become so complex and expensive. Outsourcing recording and recording contracts has numerous advantages for both sides: it establishes partnerships and stabilizes fee and other expense structures, it ensures that service levels can be guaranteed, it shares access to scarce resources and specialized skills, and allows both sides to change partners without upsetting the running of either's internal operations. Both companies also have sufficient time to focus on the core of their operations, doing what they do best, by leaving functions that are not part of their know-how to another company.

> EMI, and other big companies, as early as 1980 weren't using their own studios anymore. They were also starting to subcontract private studios … because big companies don't actually maintain their own in-house recording space. Because one studio cannot possibly supply the demand for work. So they contract it out' (Author's interview 2006 Chris Harper).

An interesting economic interplay between the IRS and the majors now exists due to outsourcing: once the indies have created a product and 'emerge to pioneer the new sound and style' it is 'followed by re-concentration and market stagnation once more as the majors regain control' (Shuker 2002, 185). Majors therefore capitalize in turn from indies' relatively inexpensive product and innovation once they have gained economic control. Distribution deals are one of the ways that majors can achieve this objective.

Apart from the economic benefit to indies by capitalizing on outsourcing from the majors, they are also immediately associated with a major company, as Chris Harper points out, possibly creating more business ties with other majors and also independent artists. One example of such interplay is the credits printed in the inlay of most CDs. 'You always get printed. It will say produced and recorded by such and such a studios, and that is actually very good for you. Because immediately you are associated with a [major] studio, a big name' (Author's interview 2006). As an independent myself, I always note the producer, record label and distributor on every CD I come across, as I am sure others do.

6.3. Collaboration

Some indies are also in collaboration with other indies, as in the case of Kulundu Trading's connection with Inhouse Records, which is so close that it could be regarded as a sister company. Malcolm Finlay was at one time running an association of professional recording services organization of indies in South Africa and

> ran it for three or four years. Unfortunately like most things, it takes a lot of work and people had a day job and they were busy all the time. So unfortunately we stopped functioning around 2000 I think. We probably get phone calls every two months of people that want to start it up again, and that would be very nice, because it is a very valuable tool. It allowed people from various studios to actually interact with each other, to help each other out. It was kind of a cooperation of technical people and people in the recording industry that could share ideas, share visions, monitor what international trends they are doing, that was really the focus of it (Author's interview 2005).

There are however, informal collaborations between indies. I have recommended clients to studios that I felt were more specialized with the area of the clients' needs. Indies in Gauteng have (in my experience) a loyalty to support each other in the recording field in terms of clientele, because of the realisation that everyone needs work.

A contributing factor to the economic viability of the IRS is the inexpensive means of setting up a studio: 'If I had graduated ten years earlier, 1980, things would have been way different … You would become part of EMI, or BMG, they would have their own studios. Or the SABC' (Author's interview Chris Harper 2006).

Many IRS studios, however, are not in collaboration with majors. Moreover I found in some of my interviews that IRS owners use their home studio as a project studio on the side as they have full-time 'day jobs' or income as freelancers – a necessary aspect of the economics of their project. Ronald Powell works as a Microsoft specialist in information technology which 'basically pays for my day to day [studio] expenses' (Author's interview 2005). Chris Harper, Sean Butler, Edwin Randall and Peter Auret work as freelance performers, and Patrick Schaerer has a trading business in Kulundu trading. Whether this 'external income' is earned from necessity or interest, it seems normal for studios to operate alongside another income source.

Like funding a hobby, people use external income as a means to fund their home studio. Unlike most hobbies, however, the funding can also be generated from within the studio. Malcolm Finlay's audio visual side of Penmac is providing the necessary funds for remaining in business on the pure audio side, MCM has a CD production facility (as does Stone Productions though on a smaller scale) and a video production side, Michael Hankinson rents out scores to orchestras and ensembles, and also conducts, arranges, and composes on commission. Income generation is thus a careful balance between two or more interests, and as one becomes more lucrative than another, decisions have to constantly be made about where to place time, energy, and financial resources.

6.4. Income generation

One source of income is returns (royalties) earned as a registered member of the South African Music Rights Organisation (SAMRO). Artists that freelance as session musicians can also make a quick (and relatively easy) buck on the side, and even from indies themselves. In South Africa a recording session rate is currently in the region of R850 at the top end. Once a musician is well-known as a session player, they will be recommended to other studios, for studios 'tend to be cliquish. When there's a job open, friends call friends. Why? Because the money is great. Part-time studio work coupled with teaching or live performances makes for a tidy income' (Dearing 1982, 223). In my experience that is also the case in small independent recording studios in Gauteng.

Because of the independent nature of the IRS industry, many clients are independent artists that want to remain that way, and fund the project themselves. Malcolm Finlay points out that this doesn't always work out: 'the problem with this industry – if there were enough people doing albums it would be great, but generally people that have the vision to make an album don't have the budget to match the vision' (Author's interview 2005).

Another drawback for independent artists might be the distribution of their independently funded product: 'And with the main CD space and CD stores being occupied by the majors – you can get into the major chains, but they are not gonna move volumes for you. So that is not where your money cow is in South Africa' (Author's interview 2006 Patrick Schaerer).

In terms of drawbacks for the IRS, studio session fees are sometimes compromised due to the nature of the project. Most studios have a set rate per hour (between R200 and R1 000), but this doesn't always turn out to be the invoice at the end of the production, as the latter almost always takes more time than one anticipates. 'Anyone that tells you that they charge X amount per hour and that how they do it is talking bullshit. Because studio rates are made to be broken' (Ibid). Malcolm Finlay from Penmac agrees:

> You give them [clients] an hourly rate. No, 'they need a fixed price'. You will agree to a fixed price. And then they will take advantage of the fixed price, and you end up spending twice the amount of time that you actually agreed to. I mean that is the biggest thing of wanting a studio, is that you have to watch … your hourly rate is your product. That's what it is. An hourly rate is the product. And if you are going to negotiate a fixed price there must still be a limitation on hours. Otherwise you are going to get taken for a ride every time. Because if someone else is paying, i.e. the studio for a fixed price you can spend as long as you like. In fact, then you get people that aren't even bothered to come into the studio prepared, they will come totally unprepared and start rehearsing in the studio [and] waste your time. There should be a definitive time period (Author's interview 2005).

Patrick Schaerer prefers clients to have a project fee for the whole item. The total costs are estimated by the requirements of the manufacturing process: 'do you want a producer or do you want an engineer? What studio do you want to mix, what

equipment? Do you need drum kits, do you need amps? What do you need? It comes down to that; we look at it as a project basis' (Author's interview 2006).

Another method of collecting capital returns on the merchandise is by funding the whole manufacturing process and selling stock to the artist for an increased price, to cover expenses. Mark Fourie from MCM has found this proves there is a way of 'addressing musicians and the potential that they have':

> What we are going to do is we are going to record you, but we are not gonna charge you for the recording time. At the end of that we are going to manufacture a conservative amount of stock, lets say 500 to a 1000, and then you can purchase that from us at what the PPD (Package, Price, Dealer) price would be – that is what the dealer would pay for it at Incredible, or at Reliable or at supermarket, or at Clicks or Game or where ever you would buy them. You would buy that from us, less whatever your royalties (Author's interview 2006).

Some IRS companies also use a percentage profit plan, which can include a percentage taken at the door for concerts, a gig, record sales, marketing products such as T-shirts, and even a distribution deal.

6.5. Economic viability

Nonetheless, even with all of the above business plans in place I was still interested to find if the IRS was a viable means of income. The answers differed. Ronald Powell feels PME eventually will make a profit: 'I'd say not yet, but I am planning to do so in the new year. We had lot of cut backs, obviously the purchasing of new equipment and setting up the studio cost a lot of money. I think probably in the new year we'll start either cutting even or even starting making a profit. (Author's interview 2005). Chris Harper thought that 'if I had to do only studio work, yes, it would be financially viable. The reason why I am not doing it, is that after the second month that you have to sit in the studio every day, day in day out, it becomes too tedious (Author's interview 2006).

Sean Butler, Edwin Randall and Peter Auret feel it is profitable, but also as in the case of Chris Harper, only if it is pursued fulltime. Malcolm Finlay says that it wouldn't be profitable to run his business without the AV aspect: 'it is obviously helped by the

AV side, so if you are talking purely music (audio productions) – no' (Author's interview 2005). It was obvious from my observation that Stone Music, MCM, and Kulundu were the most successful economically due to the size of their office space and the number of years that they were already successfully operating in the field.

Owning a business running from home is beneficial in at least one area: saving on rent. Chris Harper rented office space in Sandton before making the switch to homeworking because of the financial benefits it held for him. Sean Butler rented office space in Pretoria from *Paragon Pictures*, then *Mainframe*, after which he moved offices to Rosebank and finally to his home, again because of the financial implications. (Rent is far lower a priority for indies than equipment.) Prior to this he had to work many hours overtime to pay the rent, sometimes at the cost of his creative abilities. Penmac studios have saved thousands by being in a rent-free environment. Malcolm Finlay was upfront about running an IRS: 'definitely a loss-making proposition'. However, he added,

> if we were to take another person's studio and rent it, it couldn't make a profit [anyway]. We have spent about a million and a half rands on it, but we are lucky because we are a debt-free company. I owe nothing to anybody except the mortgage on the property. And the tax benefits are great working from home. If we were to rent this amount of space in this area our monthly rental bill would be between 10 to 15 thousand. Now, I bought this place, so why rent? Why have another landlord? Be your own landlord (Author's interview 2005).

Once the studio is established on home premises, it is up to the producer how much money he is willing to spend. A reasonable studio can be as (in)expensive as R10 000, but most owners spend much more. Ronald Powell spent 'in the region of probably R150 000', Patrick Schaerer spent 'a lot, a lot. A couple of hundred [thousand]', Sean Butler spent 'I would say at least about R200 000 over the last 6 years', and B-Sharp, Stone, Penmac, Mugu, Harper and MCM are far over the R200 000 mark.

The problem with owning a home studio, as I well know, is that once you start experimenting and recording with software and hardware, the fetish of upgrading can be extremely costly. I asked my interviewees how frequently they added to their equipment, and most of them were adding every six months. Ronald upgrades at a phenomenal rate: 'every month I add new equipment to the studio, because music

grows so quickly, and new sounds come out everyday, you need to keep up with the industry and you need to constantly upgrade to stay with where music is going' (Author's interview 2005). Some software packages are even designed that way: to generate a constant income for the manufacturer.

> [T]he mainstream guys that have a lot of commercial work, tend to go the Protools route. Protools is really the foundation of so many packages, but Protools unfortunately has locked themselves into proprietary that you have to buy Protools boxes, Protools this, Protools that, which makes it at the end of the day with the proprietary package … which makes it very expensive (Author's interview 2005 Malcolm Finlay).

With all the financial pros and cons, however, having a good product or successful studio can have economic benefits extending beyond the borders of South Africa; and that is where Gauteng studio owners are now looking.

> There are more and more people that realize there is a market beyond South Africa. And I think you can produce a product which is not a typically South African consumer product, and I think we have a lot of tools to do that. If you got something that is typically New York music, then aim for the New York market, why not? (Ibid).

6.6. Summary

Economic growth has paved the way for major recording companies to increase the wealth of themselves and their artists. Independent record labels emerged partly as an attempt to buy into this profitable recording business. As the majors became concerned with exploitation of their artists, so the indies gained capital by investing in the share market. As technology advanced, a gap in the market allowed independent recording companies (home studios and major-minors the like) to invest in their own business in order to become financially independent as well. With time majors became more concerned with distribution of their artists, resulting in outsourcing of recording to indies, and so a partnership with financial benefits to both parties was established.

In Chapter 7 I explore the sociological workings of the home studio. The role of the producer and other personnel as well as the role of the environment with relation to the sociological impact of the home studio, is investigated.

CHAPTER 7: 'HOMEWORKING' AND THE SOCIOLOGICAL FUNCTION OF SMALL INDEPENDENT RECORDING STUDIOS

In my research I have discussed the history, technological and economic aspects of the independent recording studio. I now look at what it takes to be the owner of a successful home studio: the personality traits, and the social, humanistic workings of the IRS on ground level. Providing a profile of the kind of 'persona' who owns a studio may shed some light on the sociological function of the small independent studio as a factor of homeworking. I am not a psychologist, but I have found in my research that the personality traits people share have a unique impact on their work in both the music and business spheres.

7.1. Profile of the small independent studio persona

The average 'home worker' (and in this chapter I use this term more than in the others) is a unique individual. Felstead & Jewson, drawing on Foucault's idea of 'technologies of the self' (as discussed in Chapter 3) identify the home worker as a person 'routinely called upon to exercise a greater deal of self-management than others in comparable workplace employment. This is because they are required to construct for themselves critical aspects of their working lives':

- they must decide *when* to work and *where* to work;
- they must, in the absence of a supervisor or manager on site, *monitor and police* their own working schedules;
- they must establish and maintain the *interface* between these work routines and the life of the household (Felstead & Jewson 2000, 112; their emphases).

Home workers are not as 'free' agents as we might think (in comparison to people working in other jobs). They require more self-motivation, self-discipline and self-organisation. 'In short – precisely *because* of the need to cope with the many constraints and pressures upon them – home workers must manage and police themselves. They are routinely required to achieve this to an extent and in ways that are not characteristic of those who earn their living in workplaces' (Ibid).

In applying the theory of homeworking to the small independent recording studio, I found that the producers do indeed have highly motivated, creative and disciplined

personae; they can work by themselves and for themselves, driven by a passion for producing that often takes them beyond obligations to the client. There are few musicians, Dearing notes, not 'resourceful enough to organize a teaching schedule, act as agents, present school instrument seminars, rent out P.A. equipment, or operate a studio' (1982, 15).

Self-motivation comes first from enthusiasm, the passion for producing: 'it is really a passion and I love it' (Author's interview 2007 Sean Butler). Second, it is motivated by financial incentives: 'normally what motivates me then is the money' (Author's interview 2007 Peter Auret). Passion however, seems to be regarded as the main driving force, 'people [who] do this that have a passion for it' (Author's interview 2006 Chris Harper). Edwin Randall says 'I don't want to do anything else. I don't need much inspiration to come and sit here. It's my life it's my love, it's my everything' (Author's interview 2006).

All of my interviewees were or still are active as performers, which requires a great deal of self-discipline in terms of practising and performing, and it seems that this self-taught discipline is transferred in their case to the field of producing. Techniques (or 'technologies of self') that home workers use to inculcate self-discipline can include 'working up to a preset time limit, promising oneself treats at the end of the work session, reproducing familiar timetables for continuity, varying work timetables for a change, combining work with other amusements or consciously avoiding distractions' (Felstead and Jewson 2000, 126). The self-rewarding factor in the home studio owner's case is often the appreciation of the product or an audience – outside or inside the studio: '[playing with] the JPO is tremendously rewarding and I think anyone in the orchestra will tell you as well. It is worth playing for even though you are not earning all that much … you are an instrumentalist, and people come just to see you' (Author's interview 2006 Chris Harper). Sean Butler agrees: 'It's fantastic to work with brilliant musicians and performers on a constant basis – l love performing, I love the fact that people clap for me. If I sit in the studio day in and day out with no clapping and performing, the work becomes very tedious, I need that aspect in my life'(Author's interview 2007).

Managing the dynamics between producing and performing as well as working in the studio requires multi-tasking all day. Yet diversity in the work environment is what keeps Chris Harper going: ‘it is interesting for me to play in the Civic on a Thursday night and come into the studio on a Friday morning and record a love song’ (Author’s interview 2006). But it requires self-policing to fulfil all the tasks. ‘This policing function is usually carried out by a supervisor, manager or colleagues who allocate work, monitor progress and impose deadlines. Probably the single most important method of controlling home workers is “payment by result” – the piece rate’ (Felstead and Jewson 2000, 171). ‘Payment by result’, as I showed in Chapter 5, is definitely a motivation in the case of the small independent studio owner.

To facilitate the interface ‘between work routines and the life of the household’, Felstead and Jewson use the term ‘switching techniques’, which refers to

> those involved with the process of changing, or switching, between the practices and expectations of the household and those of employment. They include, for example, the means employed by home-located producers to get themselves up and running at the beginning of a work session as well as those deployed in winding down at the end’ (Felstead and Jewson 2000, 127).

Mark Botha from MCM studios finds that his priorities are spread between studio and home: ‘It’s hard you know. The offices never close, specifically with the CD and the DVD [production] side’ (Author’s interview 2006).

In terms of education, many producers often start out as performers and some of them obtain qualifications (Chris Harper, Sean Butler, Edwin Randall and Michael Hankinson). Many producers feel that a qualification and/or training is an important part of the producer’s persona, for the producer is not a mere technical consultant but an artist. As indicated in the history of recording in Chapter 2, it is usually ‘the artist-producer, the musical creator whose impulse is to create records, who plays the central part in the development of phonography as an art. This is true even when the artist is not technically the producer; it is true in every field of music’ (Eisenberg 1987, 105).

7.2. Sociological function of the small independent recording studio

7.2.1. Characteristics of the 'home recording' environment

It is a common misperception that small independent studios are involved only in the recording process – as I have shown. The HS has started to fulfil many roles, including those previously filled by the majors. Besides the recording side, many have started investing in the process of marketing and managing for financial gain, but also because indies have a more holistic approach when it comes to the product they are concerned not just with the process of recording but also with the wellbeing of the product and the artist. 'A guy like Wessel (van Rensburg) for instance [he] said to me [it] this environment is so relaxed' (Author's interview 2007 Peter Auret). Ronald Powell from PME conveys; 'We want the artist to have a good product, something he can run with. We try to do the best job possible' (Author's interview 2005).

Some studios offer courses in sound engineering as in the case of Kulundu Trading: 'there is the Inhouse audio that offers training to the local industry as well and overseas' (Author's interview 2006 Patrick Schaerer). Inhouse Records also offer education through their website for those who are not enrolled in their sound engineering programme: 'the guys can download part of it [the Audiobook] for free and if they want the rest they can pay for it, and things like that' (Ibid). In addition I found that many websites (such as One Big Room) and magazine articles which discuss the philosophy behind the establishment of the home studio, as well as give pointers to the establishment and running of a home studio.

7.2.2. Motivation for establishment of a studio at home

The reasons for the establishment of the HS has mostly been the need to be socio-economically independent. According to Ronald from Power Music Entertainment 'you can sit down and spend as much time as you want to without being pressurised for time and money' (Author's interview 2005). Chris Harper was exposed to the recording environment before embarking on creating his own recording studio, and many artists such as Sean Butler and Peter Auret initially intended it for personal use: 'I wanted to record my own band ultimately. It is a vision I have had since I have been at school, to record, to have a studio. It has always fascinated me. I started it

mainly to record my own band, although that never happened, you know (I just) it sort of fell into recording other bands (Author's interview 2007 Peter Auret).

Malcolm Finlay from Penmac studios started purely because he had a passion for music and a passion for production. Prior to his studio work he was involved in industrial automation. Patrick Schaerer from Kulundu Trading started as a natural outflow from always being involved indirectly in studio work: 'I've never gotten away from [music] actually. Since I was young, I was roving at gigs; I was just involved in it, either on a band level, or on a level of selling T-shirts, or on selling CDs at gigs' (Author's interview 2006).

One of Michael Hankinson's motives was supporting the local industry in becoming socio-economically independent.

> You need to be diversified if you are going to survive the music industry in South Africa because it I such a pisswilly affair, it's basically badly supported, the local industry is badly supported. The record companies rely almost entirely on foreign imports, so if it was a Michael Jackson or whoever some of some those idiots are, that's where their revenue is. They are not interested in us here particularly, so we have to try and create our own scene. There is a lot of scope for it in [the] corporate world (Author's interview 2006).

7.2.3. Role of the producer

The producer's role is paramount in getting a good product from an artist, ready for the marketplace. It has even been argued that 'in making records of pop music the producer is the primary creator, that his role is similar to that of a film director, that the star is simply part of a bigger design and purpose with the producer in overall command' (Day 2000, 37).

Edison was what one could call 'the first producer'; he and his assistants made artists stand in front of a horn 'repeating a single number hundreds of times, while they fussed with the apparatus' (Eisenberg 1987, 102). Later producers became far more adept, not only at production work but at finding the right artists to produce. John Hammond's field trips turned up treasures such as Bessie Smith, Count Basie, and Billy Holiday. Such producers are as much the creator as the artist; they are also the editor, sound engineer, technical advisor, etc. of a production. Louise Meintjes (2003)

has shown how in the South African context producers such as West Nkosi and Hamilton Nzimande 'make music Zulu' in their role as producers – and she has also shown how the studio can become a fertile site for ethnomusicological research.

After the major recording companies came into play the role of the producer became divided into different jobs because of the size of the operation.

> The SABC many years ago was … moulded really around the BBC, and the kind of guy, sound engineer that came out of that institution, training institution if you like, he was a sound guy, but he didn't need to be a kick-nickel guy. So you will find very often that kind of sound guy, he could run the sound but if you asked him to fix a couple of cables or to re-plug things, he couldn't do that. And that's because (of) they were so specialized in their field. They would call in a technical guy and they had had the freedom to do that. They could phone the SABC and say: 'OK send me a technician to install another sound card' or whatever on the desk, and somebody would come in and do that. Typically, they didn't have that cross-over experience (Author's interview 2005 Michael Finlay).

These personnel still exist in the major record companies (as explained in Chapter 2) but the kind of producer that Eisenberg refers to – the person able to fulfil the role of sound engineer, agent, technical adviser, producer (with or without taste) etc., seems to emerge in a new form with the appearance of home studios. This kind of producer is not a producer in the true sense of the word (only fulfilling the role of producing); it is someone able to globalize all the different aspects of running a recording agency and also give artistic input. Indeed it was the role of the sound engineer becoming interspersed with the role of a producer that ultimately led to the 'sound-engineer/producer' starting his own recording studio, after having years of experience as a 'recording engineer'.

The solo producer of the home studio is thus the one that is in charge; the producer *is* the studio; the owner, the technician, the editor, the agent, the promoter, the sound engineer and the record producer – and in some cases the manufacturer. This person is a multi-dimensional worker, not skilled only in one 'job specification'; indeed, producers of the home studio as we know it today are like the genealogy of the first producers of popular music, the kind Richard James Burgess identified as the 'All-Singing-All-Dancing-King-Of-The-Hill' individual:

> These producers could easily be artists in their own right. In the movies and theatre someone who sings, dances, and acts is know as a triple threat. This type of producer will most likely write the songs, play the instruments, sing the demos and may even engineer and program the computers into the bargain (Burgess 2005, 1).

Patrick Schaerer fulfils another function, as media broker and A & R (Artist and Repertoire). 'So I put different bands together with different studios, and at the same time I do a full deal. So I will take a band, I'll develop them, I will get them to a studio, I will get them recorded, and then I will give them a label or get them a distribution deal as well at the same time'(Author's interview 2006). Home studio producers can execute other tasks such as those of an arranger, copyist, equipment repairman/studio hands, writer and secretary. Luckily in the age of digital technology, the installing and troubleshooting of software has become second nature to most of us.

However, this 'jack of all trades' producer (e.g. Sean Butler, Michael Hankinson, Edwin Randall and Chris Harper) is more relevant in the popular music field:

> In the classical field, the producer's authority is limited not only by the performer who has to approve the final mix, but by the composer who has written notes on paper. The popular composer, although more likely than the classical composer to be alive, is less likely to expect what he has written to be respected – if he has written it down at all. It is in the popular field, then, that the producer comes into his own. If the classical producer is like a film director who faithfully translates stage works to the screen, the popular producer more closely resembles the typical film director, who works from a sketchy script that he changes as he goes along. In the popular field, written notes or chords are about as important as written recipes in your *bubbe's* kitchen. The real cooking is done in the studio (Eisenberg 1987, 101).

The advantage of being a 'jack of all trades' is that one never has a 'dull or boring day. Every day is different. Every day you can do another activity. One day you perform, then you record, another day you arrange' (Author's interview 2006 Chris Harper). I myself, being a producer and a musician and also an agent of several different bands, find that I have to be multi-tasking every day. Many days are spent answering phones and emails, practising an hour or two, teaching, and finishing an arranging job. Some days I will spend whole mornings typing contracts and invoices, and gigging in the afternoon and evening. Weekends are usually very busy with gigs

and the preparation that entails. I also still have to be in charge of the daily running of the household – I have a house concert on my premises once a month where I also organize the musicians, concert, programme notes, the catering as well as the advertising and booking. Producers' lives are definitely not boring, but on the other hand it sometimes takes a toll on your general wellbeing.

Some HS owners are less active as musicians (such as Malcolm Finlay, John Paul from B Sharp and Michael Hankinson) once involved in the recording industry. Ronald Powell is a guitarist and has played bass in numerous bands during the past ten years, but 'the music side of things has taken sort of taken a sidestep and I have been spending a lot more time concentrating on setting up the studio, and getting to know how to work the studio' (Author's interview 2005).

Nevertheless, it seems that the sociological function of a producer has come full circle: from the indie producer in the fifties finding talent all on his own, to the modern day independent record-label producer, able to fulfil all the roles required such as founder, producer, sound engineer, technical engineer, advisor, media broker, agent, promoter, secretary, musician, arranger, copyist, and writer. Timbaland didn't beat around the bush in a January 2004 interview with *Billboard* when he said, 'My producing style is this, "I am the music." The artist is the front man for the producer' (quoted in Burgess 2005, 50).

7.2.4. Role of other personnel employed

Some producers work alone, some employ personnel. The kind of personnel found in home studios is discussed here as the 'side-kick', arranger, session musician, and sound engineer.

a. <u>The sidekick</u>

Burgess identifies the 'sidekick' as a person within the indie studio that will take care of 'the administrative, engineering and technical aspects of the production process' (2005, 50). In my case studies the sidekick can also fulfil the function of secretary and schedule coordinator. 'A great sidekick can, from time to time grab the bull by the

horns and do what's needed independently without looking like they're trying to take over the project, and then be able to seamlessly fall back into the support role (Burgess 2005, 8). The 'sidekick' can also be a collaborator, or co-worker, with useful complementary skills as musician/arranger/composer.

b. Arranger-Producers

Michael Hankinson makes use of the very talented Adam Howard as a fulltime arranger-producer. Michael doesn't see Adam as a co-worker or employee but as an artist in his own right, with a link to Adam's website on the Stone webpage; 'We have no employees'. In the words of Burgess the arranger-producer 'has a deep musical background and the very highest levels of formal arranging skills that have enabled them to maximize the potential in the material they are working with' (Burgess 2005, 11).

c. Freelance musicians/Session musicians

> Size and activity determine the number of people a studio employs. A busy, but not quite state-of-the-art, 16 or 24 track studio must employ more people than this, such as another engineer, a bookkeeper, or a sales representative. Most studios however, consolidate jobs to cut costs. The owner might direct, produce, and act as engineer, too. The head musician might write the lyrics and melody, arrange the music, and copy the charts, *besides* performing on the session; (Dearing 1982, 220 *his emphasis*).

Many jobs available for the average musician are in the studio (for those studios that are expanding beyond the all-singing-all-dancing-producer with/without a sidekick). The term studio musician can cover 'a range of people creating music, from the purely recreational player of a musical instrument through to those who make a specialized contribution to the recording process. Playing music is for the majority of those who do so an essentially 'amateur' activity, which may become a career option' (Shuker 2002, 207). Studio musicians are contracted on a per job basis, and good studio musicians can earn a stable income from session work.

The qualities looked for in a studio musician those of a 'craftsman', according to Dasilva and Dees (1984), in the sense that he/she must be technically skilled with excellent sight-reading abilities as well with a range of different musical styles, able

to play anything from film music to jazz, jingles, and just sound effects. Those musicians who failed to become famous in their artistic career in the sense that they have not been able to sustain a lifestyle on the stage, often find their way into a production house, also because they have by then required a great deal of experience and technical fluency necessary for studio work. Experience is of crucial importance. Dasilva and Dees also point out that

> a period of 'dirty work' in hack jobs often precedes success in studio works. Thus the studio performer is usually a person who has had to make difficult psychological adjustments through a multi-careered adult life. The art/commerce conflict remains very much in evidence under the form of psychological ambivalence about one's occupational past, one's accomplishment, and one's ambition (1984, 59).

Some studio musicians become successful in their own right as performing artists or even producers or vice versa. Even Glen Gould became a full-time studio musician.

d. Sound Engineers

The sound engineer

> represents the point where music and modern technology meet. A sound mixer must know the characteristics of hundreds of microphones and a variety of acoustic environments, and how to employ them to best record a musical instrument; the capabilities and applications of a large array or sound-processing devices; the physical capacities of recording media for accepting and reproducing sounds; the operation of various recording machines; and, finally, how to balance or 'mix' at a recording console the electronic impulses coming into a studio 'control room' from a variety of live and prerecorded studio sound sources as to produce a tape that contains a recognizable and effective musical experience (Shuker 2002, 281).

In my own studio Ronald works as a sound engineer and technician and I fulfil the arranging, writing and programming and administration functions. Some sound engineers who work or are trained in the indie environment also execute jobs outside: 'one of our engineers who works for us [Inhouse Records] works for [Patricia Lewis], does her lighting and everything. Ja, a lot of our guys, they get contracted' (Author's interview 2006 Patrick Schaerer).

7.2.5. Clients

What I also found interesting in my research was the range of people that passed through the studios.

> I would say you get all types of people. Some people that aren't into the music industry. We get doctors, we get professional people that are just keen to do an album that they have just always wanted to do throughout their whole life, and they have never had the opportunity. Now we can give them an opportunity to do it at a low budget. And also we get full time musicians that come in and record (Author's interview 2005 Ronald Powell).

Chris Harper has clients from recording companies, and when asked what kind of people pass through Kulundu Trading, Patrick Schaerer answered: 'musicians, engineers, producers, wannabees, chancers, pros'. Most case studies had all sorts of people passing through, although mainly musicians.

I was also interested to know whether the studios advertised, and if so, how. I found that most producers were part of an 'internal network' operating by word of mouth advertising from satisfied clients as well as references from other producers and studio musicians. I get clientele from my public performances and advertising on the internet. Most of my case studies did no advertising and gained clients purely by word of mouth, however. Thus: 'you do one bad job and you lose clients, you do a good job and you get clients. You know it is pointless for me to advertise because then I am going to get people from all over you know, and actually, what I really want is sort of people that know what they want' (Author's interview 2007 John Paul). Inhouse Records advertise in glossy magazines (as did Penmac previously), through radio ads and printing their name or label on commercially released CDs. Six of my case studies (PME, Stone, Mugo, MCM, Penmac and Inhouse) have websites advertising their studios.

7.2.6. Financial advisors, agencies and others

The internal network helps to build a financial base. As a bit of a 'jack of all trades' myself, I have come to realise what a huge financial benefit agencies hold for musicians; firstly providing many job opportunities for musicians to perform and

secondly as a networking aid in terms of finding the correct studio musician for a project.

The recording studio, whether it be the 'indies' or the majors in the field, have a unique kind of employee who deals with the artist. These people whether it is producers, sound engineers, marketing directors or promoters have a very important role in the creation on a unique product for the artist and the means to make it marketable to the public.

7.2.7. Role of the environment

> Some performers [around 1920] felt intimidated by the studio setting, or at least have been unable to assume the commanding authority that they were able to summon without effort on the concert platform or opera stage. Certainly the early studios were depressingly dingy. Gerald Moore was immediately struck by the strangeness of the studio at Hayes in 1921, the unreality of the atmosphere, cut off from all natural sounds and from daylight, and with no carpets or furnishings of any kind to soften the Spartan surroundings (Day 2000, 48).

Luckily things have changed somewhat since those days. Most independent recording studio owners make sure that their environment is pleasant, first because it is a home environment where a great deal of time is spent, and the producer often wants to be comfortable for long periods of time, and second because a relaxed environment helps the performer get a better sound. Most performers don't play as well under stressful circumstances as they would perform 'at home'. '[T]he environment and "vibe" … is more important than anything else. Yes, you need good equipment, and yes, you need as much knowledge and experience as you can gather, but all that is worth nothing if the artist is unhappy and uncomfortable while trying to create his masterpiece' (www.onebigroom.co.za, accessed 1.8.07).

> Home – as a specialized site of residence, consumption, leisure and family life – is a recent phenomenon, generated by the high levels of structural differentiation typical of modern societies. Prior to the industrialization of production, the greater part of the labour process was located in places of residence. In modernity home becomes the classic expression of 'habitus' and everyday lifeworlds (Felstead and Jewson 2000, 174).

The HS sound room environment is completely different from that of bigger recording studios. 'When you are in that dark small room and that red light goes on and you

know that you just have an hour to record this sonata, then you start praying and get even more nervous' (Author's interview Edwin Randall 2007). He feels that it is 'much better to tell an artist "Come bring your things, let's find a sound that is going to make you happy", so that you don't feel as if you are working against the clock' (Ibid). Michael Hankinson has placed his grand piano next to the window in his sound room overlooking his ½ acre garden, as has Peter Auret from Mugu.

Chris Harper says of lighting conditions, 'it makes a big difference to record in a room where you have natural light and you have a window that looks out on the garden' (Author's interview 2006). An interesting environmental feature of the home studio came up in two of my interviews. Both Michael Hankinson (Stone) and John Paul de Stefani (B-Sharp) added a guesthouse to their studios 'so that people … can relax and focus on their project. The idea I think, I don't know if you agree, is that we see ourselves as a creative centre that people that want to take a little more trouble' (Author's interview 2006 Michael Hankinson). John Paul lets his guestroom to bands: 'I just charge for the month, and I give them a better rate'. It is clear from my research that home studios go the extra mile for their clients.

7.2.8. Dynamics of working at home

As mentioned before some home producers also work as freelance musicians and therefore multitask between various lives. In terms of the time spent 'at home, at work' most producers are vague about the actual number of hours per day they spent in the studio – working and living in the home environment seems to have eroded the between sleep, leisure, eat, and work. I got answers ranging from two to ten hours per day. Chris Harper said 'I would say every minute of recording that you hear on the CD there would be at least twenty hours spent in the studio. That is the ratio of the time versus results. It is really very (very) long' (Author's interview 2006). The productions of Chris Harper usually spans over short bursts of time, and combined with his work as a musician, on average doesn't exceed the 8 hour working limit per day. Malcolm Finlay also concurs; 'Far too many! Look it is a job that requires to be passionate about it, otherwise if you do it purely for the money, you will never make it. Because you always have to put in extra hours. So I would say at least twelve hours a day' (Author's interview 2005). Note that Malcolm's hours include the work on the

audio side of Penmac av. Patrick Schaerer basically lives in his office (due to his work in the trading business as mentioned in 4.2.5): 'I am always here' (Author's interview 2006).

Time management becomes then a vital part of daily working in the small independent studio. Moreover,

> what is important about autonomy is not so much the independence in the work itself, but the autonomy in putting together the different pieces of everyday life and coping with the different daily time patterns … This independence is not only about freedom to choose the working methods, hours or pace of work, but, and most importantly, it is about better chances to form the structure of one's everyday activities oneself (Salami 1997, 113 quoted in (Felstead & Jewson 2000, 112).

John Paul from B-Sharp studios has consciously scheduled his working time to avoid falling into the trap of working all the time, so that he has time for leisure and family. 'I normally work from eleven to seven. Then I will do occasionally at night half past seven till eleven' (Author's interview 2007). One of the challenges that the home worker faces is the ordering and maintaining times and places of work and home.

> These, we argue, include the social skills and techniques entailed in such matters as: drawing spatial and temporal boundaries; switching between the times and places of work and family; preventing unwanted intermingling of domestic and work life; coping with isolation; responding to unpredictable variations in work loads; combating encroachments by employers and others into the home; and maintaining a credible employment identity (Felstead and Jewson 2000, 172).

Contrary to the apparently somewhat disorganized time schedule of my case studies, all of them had in fact allocated space for homeworking, which set clear boundaries of living space and working space. Chris Harper, Sean Butler and Edwin Randall had the studio within their immediate living space and not as the other case studies, in an outside building or at one side of the home. However, this didn't seem to affect their working hours or affect their ability to shift their mind frame from home-life to work-life. Felstead and Jewson are of the same opinion with regards to the strategies adopted by home-located producers. 'One approach, it is argued, is to establish a clear separation between domesticity and employment. This strategy seeks to replicate the conventional divisions of home and work within the household' (2000, 112). Furthermore the authors establish the complexities of working at home in terms of the

boundaries that home-located producers confront and negotiate. On the one hand the management of 'boundaries *between* the household and the outside world and, on the other, the organization of boundaries among activities conducted *within* the household' (Ibid; their emphases).

The home environment thus has taken on a different role in modern living. Not many people worked from home fifty years ago, yet it is now quite common. In fact houses are increasingly built with a room with a separate outside entrance, intended as an office or working space; and many inhabitants of established houses have turned their spare bedroom or garden cottage into an office/studio. The borders of home and work are becoming porous, and with internet it doesn't really matter where you work. 'In principle, the home-located worker could be anywhere, even a different time zone on the other side of the planet' (Ibid, 174).

Although the above sounds a perfect scenario, keeping boundaries between home-life and work requires constant vigilance. John Paul has his studio separate from his home and also specifically divides his hours between work- and home-life as to avoid interference on either side. Like many producers he loves the dynamics of working at home:

> I have always done it. To me it is great. Here I have got access to every major freeway within 5 minutes, being in Rivonia. I am in a very quiet place on half an acre. Everybody comes to me, I don't go to them, unless I have to go to the SABC. I save at least an hour travel twice a day. So I have two more hours to work, to relax. I have always worked for myself, so I am quite disciplined, never missed a deadline ever (Author's interview).

7.3. Different production roles of home studios

7.3.1. Backing tracks

As a performer of both classical and commercial music, I have found that during the past few years the commercial performing industry has moved away from using a big ensemble or band at gigs. The tendency is to use fewer musicians accompanied by backing tracks or 'backtracks' as they are commonly known. The advantage is that solo musicians, duos or trios can earn more per gig due to the fact that the fee needn't

be split up among five to eight musicians as in the past. The use of backtracks can even make the performance of one or more musicians seem like a whole big band or orchestra. It also holds multiple advantages for the IRS industry. Sean Butler, Chris Harper, Stone Music, Power Music and Edwin Randall all make backtracks as part of our studio operations. Edwin Randall highlights the advantages:

> [It is] a good learning experience for you to know how do you make the drum track, or how do you build your strings around. How do you do the bass with the kick drum; it's a very good learning experience. If you wanna learn how to operate a studio, first make a couple of backtracks. And then you can move on to more serious stuff, or your own, or more creative things. But it is a good learning experience (Author's interview 2007).

7.3.2. Demos

Musicians are learning the ineffectiveness of sending demo tapes to recording companies, so demo taping business is decreasing. '"We don't tell musicians it's worthless, because it is like cutting our own throat," said a 16-track studio producer, "but we encourage them to use the tapes in more productive ways"' (Dearing 1982, 228). These other ways include submitting to music publishers, independent producers, audio visual firms, and booking agents. Demos are also used in promo packages and are a good way for local groups to hear how they actually sound on tape. Some indies 'don't do demos. It is not really the focus of our business' (Author's interview 2006 Michael Hankinson). Artists nowadays rather spend money on creating a few singles than to waste revenue on a product of lesser quality that can't be published. 'I would say [demos] constitutes to about ten percent of the time in the studio' (Authors interview 2006 Chris Harper).

7.3.3. Full CD production

All my studios were invested in creating full CD productions. 'I would say 60 percent would go to arranging, to arranging scores for musicians. To actually record those musicians, to record singers, and to record the whole CD' (Author's interview 2006 Chris Harper). 'I do full albums – I do a little bit of demos – look I mean whatever. I am not fussy – but I try to move away from demos and move into more doing albums' (Author's interview 2007 Peter Auret).

Some recording studios are involved in projects for bands abroad: ‘the size of the local market being so small [we do] a lot of stuff overseas, where we work with bands overseas and they come over here to record and they take the stuff over and sell it’ (Author’s interview 2006 Patrick Schaerer). Michael Finlay is of the same mind: ‘There are more and more people that realize there is a market beyond South Africa. And I think you can produce a product which is not a typically South African consumer product’ (Author’s interview 2005).

7.3.4. Music for films and advertisements

Music for film did not feature prominently in my case studies. All except B-Sharp, MCM, and Kulundu would be interested in a contract for film music, as this is a stimulating experience. Four studios (Stone, Mugu, Harper, Butler) made jingles and music for ads and launches. ‘The sort of projects we did is like the launch of the BMW 7 series’, said Michael Hankinson. ‘We composed a mini musical for it [and] we also did the Cell C launch, we wrote an anthem for Cell C … It is good budgets, you know I mean anything from 50 000 to 250 000 for the music’. Peter Auret does jingles in addition to full CD productions and the odd demo ‘but not a lot’.

7.3.5. Other production roles: printing, arranging, mastering, editing

In addition to film music and jingles, backtracks, demos, and CD productions, some studios offer services such as printing CDs (MCM, Stone), and hiring scores (Stone). All the case studies arranged CD productions as part of their services in recording a full album, but Edwin Randall, Stone, Sean Butler, and Chris Harper also did arranging on material other than that intended for CD productions. ‘We have a hierarchy of all the schools we have done over the years, which is about 250 commercial arrangements. Anything from ‘McGartha Park’ through to “The Prayer” and Josh Groban stuff and all that, we hire that out’ (Author’s interview 2006 Michael Hankinson). Most studios outsource their mastering procedure as this is a very sophisticated time-consuming process, with the exception of Kulundu, MCM, and Penmac, who include it as part of their comprehensive package deal to clients.

Finally, producers also do the odd editing job apart from that required in a CD production. Here is a rather unusual example:

> [T]hey have an equestrian function on which the horses must walk to the music. It is a very prestigious event, and they have to edit the music, not just in terms of the timing, but also the speed of the music; the choreography is very difficult. So people would come to me and say for example we need 5 minutes and 32 seconds that is sliced, and musically but also very seamlessly we need this to be edited into another piece, but that piece happens to be at the wrong tempo; so digitally you go and without changing the pitch you make it slower or faster, to whatever style they want to, whether it be foxtrot or waltz; it is amazing (Author's interview 2006 Chris Harper).

7.4. Summary: small independent studios as a phenomenon

In Chapter 3 some of the characteristics of the typical small independent studio were mentioned. In Chapter 2 I described the studio as 'mostly [concerned] with recording local artists at an affordable rate'. Drawing upon the information in Chapter 7, the home studio appears to have a much more comprehensive function than simply that of producing a recording. The persona of the producer has a dynamic effect on the function of the studio, the environment influences the client, and the dynamics of working 'at home' amount to a complex relationship between many things, achieved with a fine internal balance between people, equipment, time, and space.

The case studies chosen for this research, although on a micro scale and restricted to the Johannesburg area, were chosen because they were typical of the phenomenon elsewhere, and reflect much of what happens on a macro scale in the rest of South Africa. Therefore, drawing on the conclusions of this Chapter, I will end by providing a reworked definition of the home studio, and with recommendations and advice for prospective studio owners in Chapter 8.

CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSION

8.1. Revised definition of independent recording studios

It is clear from my research that small independent recording studios are a fairly recent phenomenon, emerging in the past twenty years with the breakthrough in technology and the drift towards working at 'home' or at least being self-employed. This can now be looked at more widely, as representative of a cultural and social change in the South African recording industry. In addition to the technological impact, the home studio has an economic impact on the recording industry and other industries of South Africa by functioning as a business at the hands of the owner/producer either by private contracts or sub-contracted projects.

Besides being ignored as a quality operative entity, the HS was once seen as just a recording facility, or a DIY hobby of musicians. This is no longer the case. As my research has shown even on a limited sample of studios, the HS not only fulfils a far great number of functions than it ever did before, but it also operates on a fully professional level, able to command a wide-ranging clientele including even some of the major record companies themselves. Small independent studios in Gauteng have proved flexible and innovative in their dealings with artists and competitors, and the owner of the HS is also able to be creative in terms of his own career. The qualities that I found among my interviewees – self-discipline, self-monitoring, switching techniques or multi-tasking, as well as being multi-dimensional performing artists – were not only able to sustain them financially and artistically, but they were also impressive in terms of small business enterprise and contributing to the development of the South African music industry.

In terms of space, the IRS is an independently functional space/room/office usually within the physical boundaries of the home. As for the artist, performing and being recorded to their satisfaction in a nurturing environment combined with the financial and social benefits of collaborating with an indie have had an impact on the economy of recording. The different production roles also provide work and opportunities for studio or freelance musicians, sound engineers, arrangers and composers. Finally the phenomenon of the small independent recording studio, indie, IRS, or HS in South

Africa has clearly become a permanent part of the music industry scene, and is also clearly much larger and more diverse than my research was able to take into account.

My redefinition of the home studio in light of my findings in this research is as follows:

The IRS or independently functioning unit, although it can still function partly as a DIY hobby, can be seen as a professional production company once it has released commercial products into the market. It can be a relatively inexpensive digitally operated entity among the self-employed musician providing affordable and dependable services to numerous independent musicians and artists. Although often in collaboration with majors, these studios are neither in competition nor reliant on them for production work, but rather their collaboration acts on the level of distribution.

The IRS is also clearly able to perform more than just recording functions, so the term ‘small independent recording studio’ itself is something of a misnomer. They are skilled in production and rapidly becoming more skilled in what were seen previously as major recording companies’ tasks, such as marketing, managing, mastering, and manufacturing of CDs. In addition they provide a unique tranquil environment for the artist to record – especially impressive in the hectic lifestyle and culture of Gauteng – as well as a multi-faceted technical environment and a producer who is concerned with the satisfaction of the client: with process more than product.

Their place in the market has been irreversibly established as a good alternative for a major recording company, and they seem to be continuing to evolve both in numbers and in quality, for the benefit of the entire music industry in South Africa.

8.2. Recommendations

8.2.1. Guidelines for aspirant studio owners

The requirements for setting up a good small (home) studio are not out of reach. However, here are some guidelines that my research revealed that might simplify the process. I believe any producer should have at least a basic understanding of the physics of sound and the physical as well as the acoustical characteristics of musical instruments, and of course the acoustics of materials, spaces and rooms. It was clear from my case studies that all ten studio owners were very well informed on all these fronts. Creating a sound room/booth with dire acoustics for recording will result in bad recordings – that was their experience – and building a studio should be a carefully investigated process. A qualification in sound engineering would therefore be ideal, but if not, a musical ear and ability to generate the sound that the client wants should be a characteristic of professional home studio producers.

In order to achieve this, the producer should know his software packages and be able to operate them at lightning speed, as clients expect results fast. At the same time, owners should not fall into the 'recording envy' trap, or upgrade merely for the sake of having the latest version. Magazines often forget to mention that software comes with a manual, and if they are in some ways faster in operation, they might slow one down in other ways, such as understanding the manual. Also remember that the stability of a system – the perfect balance achieved through trial and error – can save a lot of time in the long run, and should be more important than upgrading for the sake of it.

One should also never spend money on electronic equipment that cannot convincingly demonstrate a desirable audio effect or obvious improvement in the product. Listeners respond emotionally to *music* on a recording, and not to the software that one records it with. The use of a good microphone and its placement will result in a much better quality recording. A good quality mixing desk and good quality flat frequency response monitors will provide the best quality product once the mixing and mastering process start. Studios that decide to master as part of their functions should not over-process as the product often gets processed again for radio play. Aggressive

mixing and over-processing can make a live recording seem bland, and in fact reduce the quality and essence of the original recorded product.

The HS owner should be even tempered, not acting unprofessionally towards clients (who can be demanding at times) because it is largely clients' recommendations that will earn them their next job. They must also be adaptable and accommodating to the client's needs. When one books studio musicians, make sure that they are reliable and good readers. If the producer is not able to do a production due to time constraints, they should have an internal network where they can outsource. Also, outsourcing should be given to reliable HS colleagues so that the studio gets associated with good work. In addition, HS 'classmates' are a good source of information to the producer; save yourself agony and learn as much as you can from the most experienced people that are available to you.

Make sure that the client or musician is comfortable, relaxed and happy when recording. A harassed artist results in a frazzled performance and a product of lesser quality. Always use what is most comfortable and easiest to use. If it means that one should invest in two programmes that run in conjunction and make your system more stable, do so. Furthermore producers and musicians alike should be part of a union or a governing body that supports your trade. The Musicians' Union of South Africa (MUSA)

> was established on membership drawn from the former South African Music Alliance (SAMA), the South African Music Union (SAMU) and other non-aligned musicians and organizations. MUSA is a national representative body formed following musicians' demand for a union that would respond to economic, labour, legislative and development needs. According to their website, MUSA's mission is to ensure equitable development of South African music by promoting the development of musicians' professionalism and artistic competitiveness in a climate of economic fairness and striving for support – legislative and other that would enable and stimulate musical activity and excellence (www.risa.org.za).

Another great organization is the MIDI Trust (Music Industry Development Initiative:

> Formed in October 1996, MIDI is a non-profit organization that was formed to support growth and development of a vibrant and creative South African music industry and its artists. The focus of their activities is training and education, information, industry development and networking. It is a neutral organization in the South African music industry with a wide network of

industry stakeholders and other practitioners. The MIDI Trust is represented on various South African committees and associations. Its delegated representatives play important roles on the following three specific committees:

- The Anti-Piracy Committee of South Africa – a sub-committee of the Recording Industry of South Africa (RISA)
- The Standards Generating Body (SGB) of Music Industry Skills and Higher Education in Music
- The Technical Production Services Association (Steyn 2005, 40)

8.2.2. Issues arising from this research and recommendations

For further information on how to get rich or famous in the music industry, I would highly recommend Dearing's book *Making money, making music*: Chapter 14 focuses on the role of the small independent studio and the role that musicians and other studio musicians play in this industry. MIO online is an excellent webpage where the latest trends and articles of and in the music industry are published, and is worthwhile to visit every so often. The indie industry abroad has definitely been researched more extensively, however, in South Africa we have limited publications on this matter, in all aspects.

Although the record industry has provided phenomenally success to artists, record companies and other involved institutions, the dark cloud of piracy has begun to eat away at the profits of these individuals or institutions. The internet is certainly a phenomenal aid in digital recording cyberspace, however, not much attention has been given to the copyright and protection of the composer or song. The cyberspace copyright can of worms has grown beyond any controllable means, and many artists lose a lot of revenue on listeners that illegally copy or download their music. Not only in terms of the internet, but also software or hardware that was created to duplicate material, have resulted in composers and artists (and artists in other areas as in music) losing money and credit for their work.

Consequently, easy ways of duplicating material are now unfortunately also available to the consumer; the latter being able to copy a CD onto his computer or I-Pod (often not purchased by himself but by a friend or colleague). The internet also adds to the availability of pirated music. Some artists (e.g. George Michael) don't even bother to

release their new album or songs on CD, but rather on their various websites where it can easily be downloaded. The big record companies have taken note of this and often release protected CDs, but essentially the problem is completely out of control, and a solution may never be found:

> The same technologies that have made commercially recorded popular music a global commodity have also made it one of the world's most stealable. The International Federation of Phonogram and Videogram Producers (IFPI), the 'watchdog' of the global music industry, noted that world-wide CD piracy had doubled during 1993 to about 75 million units with a corresponding value of almost $ 700 million (IFPI, *For the Record,* April 1994, 'CD Piracy').

In Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and Latin America the proportion of pirate copies is considerably higher than the US, whilst China is considered a major offender. It seems that the man on the street doesn't consider the copying of CDs or films as stealing – the consequence of this criminality is most often that the poor musician never receives his well-deserved royalties for his work.

I believe it would be very useful to have an association of professional recording services and recording institutions in South Africa in order to help other producers through an internal network. Malcolm Finlay managed an organization for recording services, which has unfortunately dissolved. In terms of establishing a standardized level of quality commercial productions for the commercial market, an organization of this kind would be very helpful indeed, also to prevent amateur musicians and producers alike to release productions of lesser quality into the market. If the commercial market is stocked with good productions, the expectations of the man in the street will be higher, and South Africa's standard of commercial productions will be forced to improve.

8.3. Conclusion

It seems that the idea of the virtual office as a phenomenon worldwide has taken hold in the world of recording in South Africa. In my opinion the independent home studio will be in existence for many years to come, will grow within the South African economy, and will probably also become smaller and more portable as technologies continue to develop. Affordability for engineers, producers and arrangers to acquire their own office, recording studio or home studio has in the case of the music

business, as in other spheres, created an unstoppable phenomenon; the ability to start your own inexpensive business, to make the leap to independence, to be your own boss.

APPENDIX 1: SELECTED LIST OF INDEPENDENT STUDIOS IN SOUTH AFRICA

This list contain only studios that are commercially well known in South Africa, either by advertising or by word of mouth, defined as small independent recording studios according to my criteria in this research. The overall picture is far larger: Mark Fourie from MCM suggested that there were about 800 legitimate licences of Cubase alone running in SA in 2002/2003, and probably thousands of illegitimate versions. If each owner of a recording/production software programme such as this represents an independent small business, then to estimate the total number of recording studios or project studios in South Africa is impossible – it would probably run into tens of thousands. The phenomenon is also changing all the time because it is so subject to developments in technology and in the 'homeworking' situation, and it is growing all the time. Bearing all this in mind, the following is a rough estimate of legitimate small independent studios, and to my knowledge, the first of its kind.
Bold = interviewed

3rd Ear Music
8th Avenue Sound
African Dope Records
Alter Ego
Andrew Roos Studio
Audiolab
Audiotrax Recording Studio
Authentic Ideas
Barrier Productions Recording Studio
B-Natural Studios
Bop Studios
B-Sharp Studios
B & S Studios
Calahari Cosmos Studios
Celestial Music
Christa Steyn Studio
Claude Kerig Music Productions
Croakroom Records
Cube Music
Culturescapes
Darkstar Studios
David Gresham Records
Delarey Studios
Des and Dawn Lindberg Studio
Digital Cupboard
Digital Sound Designing
Dolphin Records
Downtown Studios
Edwin Randall Music Inc.
Element 7
ESP Records
Fantasia Music Record Company
Fresh Music
Fuzzy Records
Gallo Record Company
Groove City
Harper Music
H&H Production Studio
Ignite Studios
Ikwezi Music
Inhouse Records
IRM Record Company
Jampamafence Records
Joe's Garage Audio Productions
Johan Kelber Produksies
Jonathan Crossley Studio
Kick Arse Records
Khyber Blue Recording Studio
Kulundu Trading
Laslappie Studios
London Connection
Lush Records
Mama Dance Music Studios
Maclean Mastering
MCM Studios (Jailhouse)
Mega Music Trust
M.E.L.T 2000 South Africa
Merchant Records
Milestone
Mixmaster Studios

Moonstone Recording Studio
Moto-Vation Recording Studio
Mountain-Africa Records
Mugu Recording Studios
Musictyme Studios
My Sound
Nebula Bos Records
New World Records
Omni Recording Studio
One Big Room Studios
Openroom Productions
Paris Studios
Passage One Studios
Peace of Eden Studios
Penmac av
Phat Planet Studios
Polygram South Africa
Popham Road Studios
Primedia Music
Peter Thwaites Mastering
Power Music Entertainment
RPS Remote
Prosong Studios
Racket Records
Radio Park Studios
Riester International Records
Riverside Studios
Rhythm Nation Studios
Richard van der Westhuizen Studio
RMD Promotions
Rouxon Music Systems
Sampsongs
Scorpio Productions
Sean Butler Studios
Selsong Studio
Shandel Music
Sheer Sound
Shifty Studios
Shifted Audio Engineering
SMS Studios
Sound Harmonies
Soundnest Records
Spaced Out Studios
Springboard Music
Starbound Recording Studio
Ster Musiek
Stone Music Productions
Street Level Records
STTB Records
Sunset Studios
Tequila Records
The Audio Lab
The Cooler
The David Gresham Record Company
The Farm
The Master Room
The Music Room
The Nuthouse Studio
The Rhythm Lab
The Wave Factory
TheWorkRoom
Tin Pan Alley
Tippy Grape
Trinity Sound Studios
Trio Records
Ubuntu Records
Wadz Music Production
Waterfront Audio Co
Wildebeest Records
Witchdoctor Records
Wolmer Records
X-Plosive Records

APPENDIX 2: LIST OF SOUTH AFRICAN INSTITUTIONS OFFERING SOUND ENGINEERING DIPLOMAS AND TRAINING COURSES

This list of institutions and companies offering what look like courses or training in sound engineering was compiled by surfing the web in August 2007.

Allenby
Academy of Sound Engineering
ANKA Productions
ASE (Academy of Sound Engineering)
AVL Productions & Distribution
Audio Masterclass Music Production and Sound Engineering Online Course
Calahari Cosmos
Cape Audio College
CityVarsity
Damelin
Home study recording (‘home schooling’) www.audioinstitute.com
Inhouse Records
INTEC Creative Studies
The Institute of Sound Technology
London Connection
M & D Studios
Music Production Sound Engineering College and Dj School
Paul Bothner Music
Prospectus Diploma in Audio Engineering
Rhodes University
SABC (South African Broadcasting Service)
SCIM (SoulCandi Institute of Music)
University of KwaZulu Natal

APPENDIX 3: SELECTED LIST OF USEFUL WEBSITES

http://www.3rdearmusic.com
http://www.AccessRS.co.uk
http://www.africandope.co.za
http://www.andrewsimpson.org
http://www.ankhaproductions.com
http://www.alter-ego.co.za
http://www.audio-recording-center.com
http://www.audio-trax.com
http://www.authenticideas.co.za
http://www.bandsstudios.co.za
http://www.bothner.co.za
http://www.calaharicosmos.co.za
http://www.celestialmusic.co.za
http://www.charlesdye.com
http://www.greshamrecords.co.za
http://www.drum-tracks.com
http://www.esprecords.co.za
http://www.factory.co.za
http://www.freelance-studio.go.ro
http://www.freshmusic.co.za
http://www.gallo.co.za
http://www.geocities.com
http://www.gypsy.co.za
http://www.home.earthlink.net
http://www.homerecording.about.com
http://www.homerecording.com
http://www.homerecordingmag.com
http://www.irm.co.za
http://www.kevinkemp.com
http://www.livethemusic.co.za
http://www.marktaw.com
http://www.milestones.co.za
http://www.mio.zo.za
http://www.modrec.com
http://www.moonstonestudio.co.za
http://www.mugustudio.com
http://www.musical-keyboard-guide.com
http://www.musicianstechcentral.com
http://www.music-recording.com
http://www.newworldafrica.co.za
http://www.nuthouse.co.za
http://www.onebigroom.co.za
http://www.openroom.co.za
http://www.peaceofeden.co.za
http://www.pitchpromotions.co.za
http://www.project homerecording.about.com
http://www.prorec.com

http://www.powermusic.co.za
http://www.punk.co.za
http://www.recording.org
http://www.recording-forums.com
http://www.recording-studio-tips.com
http://www.recordingwebsite.com
http://www.record-producer.com
http://www.revolutionaudio.ca
http://www.rickcrane.com
http://www.rmdpromotions.co.za
http://www.rpstudios.co.za
http://www.seasidelounge.com
http://www.sheersound.co.za
http://www.shiftedaudio.co.za
http://www.smstudios.co.za
http://www.soundnest.co.za
http://www.sonymusic.co.za
http://www.sound-engineering.com
http://www.soundrecordingadvice.com
http://www.soundrecordingadvice.com
http://www.stoneprod.co.za
http://www.streetlevel.co.za
http://www.studiorecordingengineer.com
http://www.tailracestudio.co.uk
http://www.tequila.co.za
http://www.thecooler.co.za
http://www.themusicroom.co.za
http://www.tinpanalley.co.za
http://www.tweakheadz.com
http://www.theworkroom.co.za
http://www.worldnetstudios.com
http://www.yavelow.com
http://www.yottamusic.com

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"Not bad, guys. Now let's do one more take, with more emphasis on tone, harmony, melody, rhythm, composition, lyrics, musicianship, tempo, and originality."