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The Wits Contemporary Performance Ensemble: A Critical Ethnography

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Research Report submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
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Abstract

This research report explores the compositional identity South African composers, mostly born after 1976, are constructing. I conduct a critical ethnographic micro study of the Wits Contemporary Performance Ensemble (WCPE), a group of young composers and performers dedicated to workshopping and performing new compositions. South African compositional identity is explored and problematised in Chapter 1, along with the identification of two schools or types of composition within South Africa. The history and formation of the WCPE is discussed in Chapter 2, while the third chapter draws on interview data to present and problematise the field in which young composers work, discussing a series of perceived 'lacks' that affect their ability to produce new music. The fourth chapter critiques and evaluates the progress the WCPE made, using Timothy Rice's model of the Subject-Centered Musical Ethnography (2003), to interpret what the music of these young composers is saying about the time and place in which they live. The conclusion considers the impact the WCPE has had on young South African composers and the necessity of a group like this in the formation of a new South African compositional voice.

Declaration

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

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Angela Catherine Mullins

13 February 2009

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Chapter 1

South African Compositional Identity: First Presentation of the Problem

'Identity' is a buzzword in the discourse around artists of every kind living and working in this century. Its impact is felt in South Africa too, and among the art music community particularly. "What does it mean," Peter Klatzow asked in his Inaugural Lecture as a Professor at the University of Cape Town in 2004, "to be an American composer, a German composer, a French composer or perhaps most controversially, a composer in South Africa?" (2004: 138). In this country there are probably as many different views on this as there are art music composers, and this has become even more evident since the end of apartheid. This research report does not aim to provide conclusive answers to this or any other questions I raise here, but rather to provide some points of departure for looking differently at compositional identity.

My first starting point is to suggest that the profound ideological shift that this country has embraced over the past decade must, in some way, be reflected in the art music its citizens create. The South Africa of 2008 is a different place to the South Africa of 1998, never mind 1988 (Harsch 2004: 4); the South African art music of 2008, I argue, as a young composer, should somehow move forward and make a break from music of the past, reflecting changes that have taken place across a range of South African experience and discourse in the past ten years. My aim is not to be prescriptive, but rather, from within my own position as an emerging composer to explore some of the ways in which this change might be represented in new music by composers of my generation, suggesting the terms for a larger argument that is beginning to take place amongst them.

I chose to conduct this research in order to investigate more deeply among my peers issues that I discovered through research I conducted in my Bachelor of Music (BMus; Mullins 2007) degree, as well as to reflect on my own sense of identity. In the previous work I considered how composers use music to express themselves and their social, cultural and political situation, showing in particular the effect lack of funding has on contemporary South African art music. I also considered the role that music education and especially a university environment can play in the preservation of a contemporary

art music culture. There, I interviewed four composers between the ages of 40 and 50, showing the anxiety they felt around constructing a South African identity in relation to South Africa's past, including its musical past; the "music that my father taught us was beneath us" as Paul Hanmer put it. I argued that the identity a composer constructs for himself[1] also becomes a vital tool in the survival process for post-apartheid composers.

In the present masters research I focus on a younger generation of composers, mostly between the ages of 18 and 32, and explore some of the same, or new ideas that emerged from among a larger group of interviewees, in greater depth. The composers I interviewed in 2007 had started their careers before 1994 and had 'composed through' the fall of apartheid, a period which seemed to offer composers many challenges and the need for positions to be taken. The younger composers are living in a very different time and place. They have not composed through what Thomas Pooley has described as a "restructuring of the field" (2008: 6), but have entered a field that appears to them already restructured, almost a 'given', without fully understanding how it has developed, perhaps, but at the same time arguably less aesthetically encumbered than their predecessors were.

As the present research progressed, nevertheless, I found other kinds of stumbling blocks for young composers of contemporary South African art music being articulated, mostly around representing their 'South Africanness', and such issues warranted closer examination as I proceeded. Without pre-empting my findings too much here, I do want to take one or two major threads and use them in order to present the historical and theoretical frame of this research, for that frame did emerge partly alongside the collection of my data rather than only in advance of it. The most significant finding was that composers I interviewed generally felt that, due to a lack of resources and opportunities, art music that is produced in South Africa cannot compete on the same level as art music produced in Europe or America, although they thought the very fact that the work is 'African' gives it an advantage.

This may be simply stated but is a highly complex matter, for a number of reasons. As Evan Ziporyn says: "the very notion of 'otherness' has become a marketable commodity,

[1] The use of the male gender in this essay always implies the female as well.

incorporated into the aesthetic" (1998: 44). South African composers have found that they can use their 'otherness' to compensate for what they perceive as lack of art music skills caused by the serious lack of resources and opportunities. Electroacoustic composer Dimitri Voudouris commented in an interview, for example, that the fact that he was the only composer from South Africa at a recent competition in France had greatly served in his favour (Author's Interview 2007). Although there may be these beneficial aspects to being 'other', those composers of my generation whom I interviewed seem to be trying to forge a new South African art music identity that moves away from borrowed 'African elements' and embraces, rather, a new sense of multiculturalism that they are experiencing in South Africa.

Martin Stokes identifies one of the problems encountered in expressing local (multi-) cultural identity as that of discrimination: "musicians often appear to celebrate ethnic plurality in problematic ways. Musicians in many parts of the world have a magpie attitude towards genres, picking up, transformed and reinterpreted in their own terms" (Stokes 1994:16). One consequence of this attitude could be a generic, non-specific type of 'South African music' that is not representative of any particular South African culture, but is, rather, a hodgepodge of various cultures, completely removed from any sort of context. This type of music seems to present an idea of what composers think the average person on the street would immediately recognise as 'African'. The reverse of this problem is that what South African composers might feel is African could appear, in an international arena, non-specificially 'other'. In her review of the 1999 Symposium and Festival entitled "Towards an African Pianism" in Pittsburgh, for example, Christine Lucia has commented, "the prevailing percussiveness in textural treatment [of the works presented at the symposium] could just as easily have come from Bartók as from an African percussion culture" (1999/2000: 132).

The type of representation in which Africa is constructed for reasons of 'visibility' if not marketing, was characteristic of the older generation and can be seen, I suggest, in works such as Jeanne Zaidel-Rudolph's *Life Cycle*. It is visible in other aspects of South African society, not just music. In a 2003 interview with Gina Waldman, the South African visual artist Brett Murray commented:

> There is a sudden shift and change in the way that South African products are marketed and presented and this is fascinating, but also exposing. It is hilarious the Soweto String Quartet actually perform in those kitschy zebra skin jackets and that women in parliament actually wear weird Eryka Badu headgear that have no South African resonance. The use of kitsch creates a 'dumbed down' version of Africa presenting a European idea of Africa (Murray interviewed by Waldman 2003:58).

Some of the composers I interviewed were similarly concerned about the fact that an African art music identity could also appear "kitsch". Clare Loveday, for example, went so far as to say that she did not feel compelled to express a South African identity at all in order to be accepted on an international platform. This was not because she shunned her African roots but because she felt that her music would naturally exude a "South African sound"[2]; and that she should not have to consciously extract things that she perceives to be South African and paste them into her music. A 'natural' rather than an 'artificial' approach was, to her, more sincere.

It is worthwhile staying on this point a little longer. In Loveday's essay "Locating *Blink*" (2008)[3], she reflects that while as a South African composer she may not have access to all the resources European composers have (a wide range of scores and recordings as well as fairly frequent live performances of contemporary music, some degree of critical climate generated by media debate, national acknowledgment of new music through organisations like the BBC Proms, a larger critical mass of colleagues, easier access to state-of-the-art technology, and so on), she does have something distinct to offer; and she calls this distinctness "a South African voice". During her experience of having the ensemble work *Blink* performed in Vienna, she found her voice to be immediately different to those of her European counterparts, simply (as she saw it) by dint of some kind of osmosis of the world in which she lives and which she is seen as 'coming from'. Although Loveday made no attempt to incorporate African elements, therefore, the work was nevertheless perceived as African by the Viennese audience (Ibid).

These issues speak to a distinction I found emerging throughout this research, emanating particularly from my informants, between two apparently different approaches to writing

[2] All quotes are taken from the author's interviews unless otherwise stated.
[3] Presented at a seminar in the Wits School of Arts on February 21st, 2008.

South African art music, which I briefly summarise here. These 'types' are not necessarily opposites or even mutually exclusive, but just two different approaches. The distinction, as highlighted by my informants, is however useful for the purposes of my argument.

The first type is perceived as South African because the composer consciously constructs a music that sounds South African, while the second, to which Loveday's *Blink* seems to belong, is perceived as South African due to the 'difference' of the composer's working environment. In the first, the composer uses musical quotations or devices in order to consciously generate a South African sound. This type of art music can be compared to what Volans has called 'airport art' (see below, p.8) and may even be viewed as a form of exoticism[4]. In many cases the perceived 'African elements', which may include polyrhythmic devices, cyclical forms or timbral imitation, for example, are taken out of context (or are not even African) and become more or less subsumed within a new setting. Martin Watt and Jeanne Zaidel-Rudolph (2006), have problematised this issue as follows:

> The use of imitation could easily run the risk of producing results which may be condescending and patronising to the imitated culture. This 'outsider' syndrome, signifying a possible lack of integrated understanding of the elements and context of African music may well generate a music that is shallow and unintentionally counterfeit. 'Quotation' might possibly situate the culture it quotes completely out of its context, thus destroying the social significance of the music, and 'transformation' could produce such a distorted and diluted adaptation of the source material that the intrinsic purpose, nature and inherent spirit of the original may be damaged. Any attempt at a successful synthesis of two or more cultures seems to be inherently fraught with pitfalls (Watt and Zaidel-Rudolph 2006, 143-144).

Although they go on to discuss 'successful' combinations of African and Western materials, their problematization highlights the anxieties I (still) found among my informants around the conscious use of 'other' material.

The second approach to composition was perceived as less pre-meditated and more 'resultant' by my informants. This may in large measure have to do with the fact that my informants were from Gauteng, and this area of post-1994 South Africa has become a

[4] See Pooley 2008, 6 on this point.

diverse, multicultural place, now completely unique in what is already a unique country in the world. Immigrants from all over the African continent can be found here, each bring with them their own culture, religion, language, art and music. Within this rich conglomerate of African cultures remain the remnants of the colonial and apartheid eras in which European culture was celebrated. This omnifarious culture offers the composer a fascinating space from which new, unique work can 'result'. There are, however, several challenges the composer faces in this environment. Funding for arts and culture, particularly for a genre of music that was once closely linked to overall artistic support for whites during the apartheid regime (Klatzow 2005, 138), is in short supply in a developing country. This lack of funding results in a lack of resources, support, infrastructure and opportunities. Composers are obliged to adapt to the circumstances in which they find themselves and compose accordingly. These two things taken together, then – a far more diverse, multicultural environment and a tightening up of opportunities that then requires greater inner resourcefulness and ingenuity to deal with – has resulted in the creation of a space in which the possibility for composers to develop an original voice now exists in a way it did not before. This new voice is one that seems to be arising out of a conscious decision to move away from an 'African sound'.

The way in which I have outlined these two types of composition suggests that they are two cut-and-dried schools of thought. They may, however, be more usefully seen as extreme points along a continuum. Composers may operate somewhere between these extremes or oscillate between them according to the demands of a certain piece or the terms and conditions of a commission. Both extremes, however, I argue reflect a conscious adoption of compositional identity. The first illustrates a choice to present a strongly South African identity by borrowing material or devices that the composer perceives to be 'African'. The second is a decision not to be South African in that kind of way, although a South African sound is still perceived as inevitable due to the circumstances under which the composer writes. Young composers with whom I engaged during my research seem to be situating themselves towards the 'type 2' end of the continuum, although in view of their age, in many cases this might not seem so much a matter of conscious choice (yet), but at this point in time rather a result of the ambivalent and developing attitude young composers have towards their 'South Africanness'.

South African Compositional Identity: Second Presentation of the Problem

The end of the apartheid regime saw a drastic shift in paradigm, or as Pooley argues, a compositional crisis, where composers could no longer operate along the lines of production for producers (2008: 9-10), but had to shift to a cross-cultural paradigm in order to be perceived as politically correct and complete more effectively for the more limited funding available to art music composers. "The withdrawal of state resources and funding for the arts, as well as policies of affirmative action, educational reform, and social development after 1994 threatened the hegemony that art music held in the academy and in schools, and eroded its economic viability" (Pooley 2008: 12). Almost every aspect of South African culture post-1994 was affected by our immediate political past, yet my generation – the twenty-somethings – has had little or no experience of this time period. We are living in a postmodern, postcolonial, post-apartheid age with mostly second-hand knowledge or experience of the monumental events that shaped the collective identity of all South African citizens, regardless of their race.

I was only eight years old when I spent an entire day standing in a seemingly never-ending queue with my parents as they waited to vote in South Africa's first democratic elections in 1994. I knew that we were part of something important, but by the time I was old enough to understand just what that day meant, and the horror of what the country had been through, it was already 'history'. I was a very young member of Bishop Desmond Tutu's Rainbow Nation – a people who had overcome a history recent enough to still shape every aspect of South African life, yet slowly disappearing as new challenges were addressed and new frontiers conquered.

For my generation, the fact that throughout 'the struggle' art music was seen to stand either for or against the presiding regime and once it ended many composers used music to illustrate their 'political correctness' by constructing a certain identity, seemed irrelevant. The crisis it led to did cause an aesthetic shift "most visible in the increasing number of works that drew on African elements" (Pooley 2008: 6). A reconciliation between African and Western musics came to represent the reconciliation between the black and white citizens in the new South Africa. Despite issues already raised in the

1980s around the appropriation of African music by art music composers – a large argument that I will return to later – I believe that music such as Kevin Volans' *White Man Sleeps* (1982) did have a time and place. It was an "attempt to cross-fertilise the musical traditions of Western Europe with African tradition, without falling into the trap of producing a classical piece plus 'local colour' . . . the essence of airport art, as Volans himself puts it" (Armstrong 2002, http://www.bbc.co.uk/music/release/h3qv/, accessed 29 December 2008). It may well have been written to gain "economic and political capital" (Pooley 2008: 6), but it also said something about South African society of the time and represented a uniquely South African situation. "Division along lines of race and ethnicity was at the core of apartheid and it was these notions of difference that were contested in important ways by cross-cultural art music" as Pooley points out (Ibid 13). "Cross-cultural influence is probably a necessary antidote to the cultural divides structured by Apartheid" as Peter Klatzow put it (2005, 138).

This time and place, however, has passed us by – the statement has been made, or as Volans himself says "the moment for this kind of work has passed, along with the apartheid State" (Composer's Statement, www.kevinvolans.com, accessed 15 December 2008) – yet many composers still chose to write in this idiom. Moreover, the South African Music Rights Organisation (SAMRO), South Africa's largest and most active commissioning body has, until recently, according to Pooley "insisted on the inclusion of African elements to celebrate the new nation" (2008: 21)[5]. The postcolonial inferiority complex that many composers seem to suffer from, and the way composers (still) incorporate African elements – not for the purposes of Tutu's Rainbow Nation ideal, but now rather for Mbeki's African Renaissance (an ideal that in turn is fast disappearing) – strongly suggests that South African composers still feel they can use their 'otherness' as a major selling point for their music.

In this act of 'self-othering', I argue, composers have created a kind of African boutique music that is not necessarily culturally specific, but is, rather, generic and kitschy; comparable with the zebra skin jackets of the Soweto String Quartet and 'weird Eryka Badu headgear'. Through my interaction with other young composers I have found that

[5] I tried to verify this with the SAMRO Endowment for the National Arts, but they were unable to give me an official answer.

my perception of 'airport art' music is shared. Almost every young composer I interviewed said that they do not set out to use 'African elements' in their music as they found such an approach unnatural and contrived.[6]

> I am kind of very wary of the whole appropriation debate, and not entirely sure of where I stand and where to draw the line. I always like to be very careful so it doesn't sound copied or contrived ... I don't specifically set out to portray myself as a white South African with a heritage of whatever … (Kerryn Tracey).
>
> I don't think that African music should or shouldn't be a part of my music. It's not really part of my style, but I'm not excluding it. I don't think of it in terms of 'I'm going out on the point of trying to find something African to put in my music' … it's either going to happen or it's not going to happen (Annemari Ferreira).
>
> I don't feel a duty to say that I am South African, I just think that I've lived here and this is where I've learnt so everything I write, I *assume* it's South African. If someone thinks it sounds like something else then it probably is, but I don't make a conscious effort to sound South African. And what is that anyway? (Constantina Caldis).

One of the main reasons young composers feel so differently is – ironically – precisely *because* of the massive transformation that South Africa has undergone since 1994. This transformation has affected the country on almost every level. The new government attempted to address inequality by the introduction of new legislation, and the Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) movement has opened up equal opportunities to black people in the business sector, although the enormous gap between rich and poor continues to grow. As W.M.J. van Kessel points out, the race capitalism that characterised South African society up to 1990 (according to a Marxist analysis) has given way to "the fostering of a black middle class, consumerism and African nationalism" (van Kessel 2006, http://www.narcis.info/research/RecordID/OND1321767/Language/en, accessed 8 December 2008).

Social problems like poverty, crime, violence, corruption, unemployment and the HIV/Aids pandemic are escalating, but despite all these problems, or perhaps even

[6] From here on, I do not say 'Author's Interview' and give dates, for every extract from an interview quoted, as this encumbers the text. Full details of each interviews are given at the end of this Essay.

because of them, South Africa offers an incredibly rewarding, yet trying creative space for the South African composer of contemporary art music, rich in cultural diversity. Furthermore, my particular area of study (and my home) – Johannesburg – is seen as a "polycentric and international city with a hybrid history that continually permeates the present. Turning its back on rigid rationalities of planning and racial separation, Johannesburg has become a place of intermingling and improvisation, a city that is fast developing its own brand of cosmopolitan culture" (Mbembe andNuttall 2008) and it is certainly marketed as "the financial, economic and cultural giant of South Africa – and by implication the entire African continent… Africa's most dynamic city" (*Time Out*: Johannesburg. http://www.timeout.com/travel/johannesburg/intro, accessed 16 October 2007). The idea of polarising Western and African elements in such a multicultural place seems simplistic: multiculturalism seems to be a more relevant and appropriate compositional endeavour than biculturalism.

Young composers living and working in Africa's most dynamic city must therefore have something interesting to say. But what? And who will perform it and listen to it? The most important question I asked informants in my research was, "What is the music of young South African art music composers saying about the time and place in which they live?" I examined the works of several young composers living and working in Johannesburg, a group born after 1976 who would (like me) have been too young to vote in 1994. They are young enough to have only just started their composition careers (some are still in training) and are thus expressing emerging identities, but on the other hand they are also young enough not to have needed to deal with issues of identity construction before the end of the apartheid regime. They experienced a similar musical education to composers in the generations preceding them[7].

Most of the subjects of my research belong to The Wits Contemporary Performance Ensemble (WCPE), which developed at the beginning of 2007 while I was conducting

[7] Even today, most young music scholars are trained mainly in the Western classical tradition where they are taught the history of European music from the 18th to early 20th century. Harmony and counterpoint form the basis of the theory component and musicians have to perform a Western classical repertoire on their instrument of choice.

my BMus research[8]. I started it with the help of my peers, and we had the following aims: providing exciting opportunities for young musicians to have their own compositions performed; workshopping student composers' works-in-progress as an educational experience; opening a vibrant interactive dialogue between composers and performers in order to learn the important lessons that can only be gained through practical interaction with instrumentalists experienced or inexperienced in performing new music; and establishing a cohesive 'musical community' amongst young Johannesburg-based composers. The majority of the group's members are born after 1976, and some of them are performers rather than (or as well as) composers.

The methodology I use here may be a slightly unusual one in terms of contemporary art music, but it best addressed the concern I had to adequately explore the many different tasks that collectively form the 'job' of composition and the process of identity or voice-formation. At the same time it focused on the performance group and compositional culture in which these things were manifest and through which they were achieved. I chose to use ethnographic methods such as interviews, journaling, documentary analysis, participant observation, and music analysis – broadly speaking the field work and case study method – to gather my data. Although traditionally, ethnomusicology has been the study of 'other musics', where the ethnomusicologist is required to observe and present a culture other than his or her own, conducted amongst a relatively large group of informants to which the ethnomusicologist does not belong, there is an increasing number of exceptions to these norms. Henry Kingsbury's *Music, Talent and Performance: A Conservatory Cultural System* (1988) employs ethnographic methodology to study a Western Classical music institution of which he is a member. In a review of this text, Timothy Rice comments that

> The efforts ethnomusicologists have expended in defining our field as the study of all music from the perspectives of cultural anthropology is inversely proportional to our effort to apply these perspectives to Western classical music. If this book did little else but fill this gap between theory and practice, it would be welcome (Temple University Press Book Review, http://www.temple.edu/tempress/titles/529_reg_print.html).

[8] This research does, however, also contain quotes from older composers who do not form part of the WCPE who were interviewed as part of my BMus research as well as other Wits composers who were invited to join the WCPE but declined.

Similarly, Bruno Nettl's *Heartland Excursions: Ethnomusicological Reflections on Schools of Music* (1995) makes use of ethnographic methodologies to present research on Midwestern music schools. It is the 'presentation' aspect of Nettl's approach that particularly appeals to me, for just as here "one of today's foremost ethnomusicologists takes the reader along for a delightful, wide-ranging tour of his workplace" (University of Illinois Press Book Review, http://www.press.uillinois.edu/books/catalog/67rdq6mq9780252064685.html), so, it is my intention to provide the reader of this much shorter and less ambitious report with an intimate, detailed description of the way in which the WCPE impacted on the lives of it members, including me. A more recent classical music ethnography is Stephen Cottrell's *Professional Music-making in London: Ethnography and Experience* (2004), which Cottrell describes as a "study of people through their music" (1). Cottrell contends that:

> what ethnomusicologists can bring to the study of western art music is an approach which draws more heavily on anthropological principles and which makes room for the voices of all those who consider the music to be theirs; in short an approach which seeks, however imperfectly, to promote a more generalized, collective view, even though this view may be elucidated and edited by a single ethnographer and scaffolded by the framework of his or her own theorizing (4).

A recent doctoral thesis by Nishlyn Ramanna (2007) studies several South African jazz performance groups ethnographically and emphasizes perceptions among the players, in ways that I also found useful. Furthermore, the WCPE does not have a long history that I can consider musicologically, nor do I engage in analytical method to any degree. For all these reasons, then, I chose to conduct an ethnography of my own ensemble. I am not looking at the history of this ensemble, but rather exploring it in its present state, as a living, changing entity that is constructed out of individuals who each have their own identity. I have not conducted any musical analysis because, while the music that the WCPE composers created was obviously important, I am more interested in the sociology of the group and the ideas, beliefs and experiences behind the music.

Appendices 2 and 3 list the composers and performers involved in the WCPE during 2007 and 2008. As can be seen in these Appendices, WCPE members were involved with

the ensemble to different extents – some were regular composers or performers who were involved in several WCPE concerts, while others participated on an ad hoc or once off basis. For this reason I have not conducted interviews with every person who has taken part in the WCPE, but rather only those who were intimately involved in the process of rehearsing and presenting new works, and thus could comment on this experience with more authority.

South African Compositional Identity: Third Presentation of the Problem

Aside from the problem of constructing a compositional identity in present-day South Africa and the problem of the historical and methodological contexts in which one studies that, there is also the problem of what composition itself, or the act of composition, is. I thought of the first piece of music I had ever written, how difficult it had been and the sense of accomplishment I felt once I had completed it; and my subsequent discovery that writing a piece of music is only the first of many steps involved in being a composer – unfortunately, in my experience, usually also the easiest step. Dots and lines on a piece of paper stashed away in a bottom drawer are therefore not the main concern of this research. Rather, it is about the process of bringing them to life through a performance culture of workshopping, discussion, revision, organising rehearsals and performances, facing subsequent approval or rejection by an audience, and ultimately coming to terms with perceived successes or failures as a composer. For it is only once each of these tasks has been completed that the composer can move on and write another piece of music, having learnt from a compositional process that is as much social as individual. Above all, it is the experience of having a work performed that ultimately allows a composer to develop his true voice or identity.

Here it is important to situate my research in a larger context of current thinking about composition, drawing on selected texts that have shaped this research into a postmodern ethnographic critique. Going way back, Milton Babbitt's "Who Cares if You Listen?" (1958: 35-41) provides a good starting point, for Babitt aptly illustrated the musical objectives of the modern establishment composer of fifty years ago, where music was treated as a science and progress became the ultimate goal of composition. This text also illustrates the 'ideal' role of audiences during this period and the mind set of the modern

composer. Written at the height of post-War musical Modernism, this essay represents the most extreme ideas of this time; and although the ideas are far away from what the WCPE composers were trying to do, I found this paper informative due to the number of responses it elicited. These responses include Bell's "I Care If You Listen" (n.d.), Ferky's "Who cares if you listen? Answering Babbitt 50 years later" (nd), Kowalski's "Why We Refuse to Listen" (2006), Palenstra's "On the Purpose of Composition: A Reaction to Milton Babbitt's Article 'Who Cares If You Listen?'" (1998) and Ziporyn's "Who Listens if You Care" (1998). These texts set up an interesting dialogue about changing aesthetics of composers in the modern and postmodern age.

Postmodernism itself, has yielded a number of relevant texts, that helped me situate my voice and that of the WCPE within a postmodern frame. Appignanesi's *Postmodernism: ICA Documents* (1989), for example, contains Lyotard's seminal "Defining the Post Modern" (7-11) and Merquior's "Spider and Bee: Towards a Critique of the Postmodern Ideology" (41-48). Lyotard's text, which is an extract from his 1979 book *The Post Modern Condition: A Report on Knowledge,* presents the contrasts between modernity and postmodern thought, illustrating how postmodernism should be understood as a continuation of modernity, in which new goals or outcomes take precedence, instead of a completely new school of thought or a purely chronological progression. Lyotard interrogates ideas of representation and artistic intention in postmodernism as well as ideas of tradition and revolution. Merquior identifies several varied definitions of 'postmodern' and explores the lack of uniformity and many contradictory goals and methodologies in this school of thought.

Intertextuality and musical quotation – important in terms of the 'African elements' problem outlined above – are part of the postmodern composition, and Barthes' "The Death of the Author" (1968) and "From Work to Text" (1971) both deal with the changing role of the author in terms of how material is read or presented. These texts can shed light on ways in which compositions gather meaning through their relationships with other texts and show how the composer's role changes from creator of meaning to intertextual encoder. I find the idea of intertextuality particularly interesting when considering how composers create 'South African sounding' music: for example, in discussions of the two types of South African composition above, my informants seemed

to be drawing a distinction between the active and passive encoding of 'Africanness'. Although the composer is no longer viewed as the 'genius author' as an idea inherited from romanticism via modernism, ideas of individuality and uniqueness became important in new ways in postmodern society. Since my main question in this report revolves around the issue of composer's identity, the writings of Appiah (1994), Bayart (2005), Stokes (1994), Tomlinson (2003) and Woodward (2000) are also important, contributing to the construction of my theoretical framework. With South Africa's fragmented political past, one must consider race when exploring South African identity. Appiah's 1994 article "Race, Culture, Identity: Misunderstood Connections" considers the many questions surrounding the construction of racial identities as well as collective identities in a democratic country and discusses concepts such as fractured identity and identity play, encouraging readers to be conscious in the construction of their identity.

Bayart's *The Illusion of Cultural Identity* (2005) considers the constructedness of, and anxiety surrounding cultural identity, while Tomlinson's "Globalization and Cultural Identity" (2003) explores cultural identity as a product of globalization. Woodward's *Questioning Identity: Gender, Class, Nation* (2000) looks at the many factors that affect one's individual identity. Woodward also identifies the many internal conflicts one faces and how these conflicting identifications ultimately construct our identity. She goes on to consider the links between individual and social identity and how identities are shaped by their climate. A number of my informants admitted that if and when they do consciously use an African voice – the type 1 approach to composition – they do so in order to differentiate themselves from other western composers. They seem to adopt a cultural voice in order to stand out in the global market – an idea that is more fully explored by Tomlinson. Stokes' *Ethnicity, Identity and Music: The Musical Construction of Place* (1994) has probably been of the most use in this study as it deals specifically with identity in music in time and place. Stokes argues that music is one of the strongest ways in which identity and place can be recognized, illustrating how certain musical genres or practices become emblematic of certain places and societies. This text helps me explore how young South African composers are using their music to express the time and place in which they find themselves.

Each of these texts deals with universal questions of identity, but in a country such as South Africa, with such a diverse population and troubled political and social history, I thought it important to consult texts which dealt specifically with South African identity problems. The first of these texts does not deal with identity, but does allow insight into the mindset of a previously colonized country such as South Africa. Although not dealing specifically with South Africa, Young's *Postcolonialism: A Very Short Introduction* (2003), through a number of different examples, illustrates how colonization, even now in its absence, has affected the populations of 'othered' countries. Alexander's "Black, White or South African?" (2006) and Blandy's "White SA Struggles With African Identity" (2007) both offer information on the social anxiety surrounding South African identity, while Erlmann's *Music, Modernity and the Global Imagination: South Africa and the West* (1999) contains several chapters on the function of music in South African society. Although most of the content of the book does not deal with contemporary South African art music, it reveals interesting information about how a uniquely South African identity is constructed through music.

The current social, political and economic situations in South Africa present the contemporary art music composer with a variety of obstacles to overcome. Although my main area of focus is the group of young, 'up-and-coming' South African composers who have not been the subject of any scholarly writing to date, I considered several writings on the topic of South African contemporary art music. The book *Musical Arts in Africa* edited by Herbst, Nzewi and Agawu (2003) gave important information for this study. Chapters of particular interest are Agawu's "Defining and Interpreting African Music" and Herbst, Zaidel Rudolph and Onyeji's "Written Composition". In "Defining and Interpreting African Music", Agawu interrogates what makes music African or not. The idea of labeling music as African was raised as a problem by my informants, and indeed there seems to be a great deal of anxiety around the criteria of what constitutes 'African music'. "Written Composition" explores ways in which African identity can be infused into contemporary art music through the incorporation of African material and techniques. While this text does offer suggestions for how to adopt an 'African identity' (by incorporating 'traditional' voice leading patterns and African material into Western choral music for example), it does not take a critical look at the numerous problems

surrounding the (mis)appropriation of cultural material, nor does it substantiate *why* one should try to construct such an identity.

Blake takes a much more critical approach in his article "The Present-Day Composer Refuses to Budge: Case Studies in New South African Orchestral Music" (2005), exploring how six composer express a South African identity through their music and arguing that, in many cases, South African composition is "driven not just by the market but by capitalist priorities emanating from the state" (2005: 142). This relatively current article offers interesting insight into the climate in which young composers are required to work and how composers of older generations are surviving in this climate. Lucia's report mentioned above, "'Towards an African Pianism': Piano Music of Africa and the Diaspora, Symposium and Festival" (1999/2000) was also useful in identifying the attitudes African composers from various countries have to using their own material in a western classical medium such as solo piano music.

An article of particular relevance to my study is Fokkens's "Peter Klatzow: Perspectives on Context and Identity" (2004), as it deals with the same issues of identity I am focusing on. Although this study takes a composer who began composing in a very different time period, and therefore a very different South Africa, as its case study, it is still useful as it shows how the anxieties surrounding South African identity in art music have changed over time. I return to these points later in this report (see pages 35-36). Klatzow himself comments on the problems of identity in his inaugural lecture "The Composer's Dilemma: Writing for Time and Place".

Thomas Pooley's unpublished dissertation "Composition in Crisis: Case Studies in South African Art Music 1980-2006" (2008) offers a valuable starting point for my own research as it explores the era directly preceding the generation under my focus. Pooley's dissertation examines the crisis that occurred in South African art music as the apartheid regime disintegrated, and the subsequent change from an autonomous paradigm to a heteronomous paradigm. Pooley uses four case studies to identify how compositional aesthetic changed during this time. He also speaks of "the aesthetic crisis many post-apartheid composers find themselves in" and "a prolonged state of crisis in the field", stating that the South African art music field is "self-conscious and defensive". Although

the composers under inspection in my research were not part of the shift of paradigm that Pooley identifies, they have began their careers in the aftermath of this shift and still have to contend with the ongoing crisis in the field, interpreting it in their own way.

What this small interrogation of a fraction of the literature reveals, aside from specific points of reference, is the location of my work in a complex web of postmodern discourse, one that informed my *ideas* about my subject matter. The literature that most closely informed my methodological approach was Timothy Rice's "Time, Place, and Metaphor in Musical Experience and Ethnography" (*Ethnomusicology,* 47(2), 151-179), which I deal with in greater detail in the next chapter.

Chapter 2

The Wits Contemporary Performance Ensemble: An Ethnographic Description

During the two years of its existence[9], the WCPE premiered thirty-six new works by ten composers and gave eighteen repeat performances of successful works. Forty-one instrumentalists took part in the nine concerts that, whether in a university setting or public setting, were generally well attended. Appendices 1, 2 and 3 offer more detail on the history of the group, the repertoire the group has performed, the composers and performers involved in the group and the events the ensemble performed at. I did not confine my interviews to members of the Wits Contemporary Performance Ensemble, but also included other composers studying at Wits who were invited to join the group but declined[10]. Although when I started out on this research the WCPE was very much 'in process', in order to present my research as a completed project, on a group that no longer exists, I have resorted to past tense.

The WCPE was based at the School of Arts, University of the Witwatersrand (Wits), Johannesburg. Rehearsals took place in the Wits Music Department and all but one of the group's concerts took place at the university. There was a brief, unsuccessful attempt to start a contemporary performance ensemble in 2004[11]. I remember being very disappointed that the idea had not come to fruition, but decided to use what I learnt from our brief meeting to develop a new music ensemble of my own. I decided that, if this were to be a successful endeavour, I would have to make some compromises in order to accommodate performers. While having a fixed ensemble that met weekly to workshop new compositions would have been ideal, I understood that not many performers would

[9] I started the WCPE in 2007 and ran it throughout 2007 and 2008. As I complete this research, I am completing my time at Wits and will no longer be attached to the university. My hope is that this ensemble will be able to continue in some way, but there does not seem to be anyone willing or able to take over the management of the ensemble. The future of the WCPE thus remains uncertain.

[10] Christo Jankowitz was a key member of the WCPE who participated in six of the ensemble's ten concerts as a composer and performer. I conducted an interview with Jankowitz, but two months after the interview, he withdrew his permission for this data to be used in my research, fearing repercussions – Jankowitz is currently completing his doctorate in composition at Wits.

[11] A list was passed around at the music department's weekly gathering, asking willing musicians to write down the instruments they could play in the group. Just one meeting followed. The students who had taken it upon themselves to run the group had tried in vain to find a weekly time when everyone was available to meet for rehearsals, discussions and performances. Between lectures, assignments, practicing, rehearsals and other student activities, the participants were unable to find the time to meet.

be willing or able to join the group. I therefore decided to form a fixed, yet always open to new members, group of composers. The WCPE would have a Lunch Hour Concert[12] in each of the four university teaching blocks of the year and the necessary performers would only be called on for rehearsals in the weeks leading up to the concert. I set up a list of musicians who would be willing to participate in the group in this manner and informed the composers in the group of the available instrumentation.

The WCPE was rather unconventional in that, unlike professional new music ensembles, we generally only performed new works by student composers. Performing contemporary music by established composers alongside new works would have been preferable, but I found that this was an unrealistic goal for our ensemble, because musicians were generally not willing to freely give of their time[13]: most participated as a favour to the composers whose works they were performing. I decided it would be more in line with the aim of the group and more plausible to use the little time musicians were available to workshop or rehearse student compositions.

As we began to work together more often, the composers of the group quickly developed relationships with the performers and learnt which musicians worked well together. I, as administrator and concert organiser, learnt which musicians were reliable and easy to work with, and which were likely to phone you an hour before a performance saying "something else came up", a situation I found myself in on more than one occasion. Many logistical problems arose in the organisation of these concerts, a topic I return to later.

During 2007 the WCPE String Quartet evolved: there were two violinists and a cellist in the group who were reliable and worked well together, and some students decided to hire a viola player, and then wrote string quartets, using their own money to pay this extra performer. The newly formed quartet premiered eight new compositions including

[12] The Wits Music Department, together with the Wits Performing Arts Administration, runs a concert series known as the 'Wits Lunch Hour Concerts'. These concerts take place every Wednesday between 13h20 and 13h50 in the Atrium of Wits' South West Engineering Block. These concerts feature performances by Wits music students as well as occasional performances by guest musicians.

[13] There are obviously exceptions to this generalisation and there are a handful of incredibly dedicated and generous performers in the ensemble.

Winging on a Spiral (2006) by Kate Trump, *Careful Colouring* (2008) by Annemari Ferreira and *After the Rain, the Mushrooms* (2007) by Matthew Klawansky.

The project continued into 2008 with Lunch Hour Concerts and other performances such as a concert at the Wits Art and Literature Experience and the opening of the Wits Student Architecture Film Festival. The Art and Literature Experience was our largest event, fraught with problems. It took place on Wits University's Library Lawns as part of a three-day celebration of the disciplines of the Humanities Department. A programme of 80 minutes was planned, but due to complications in moving instruments the concert started late and not all of the planned works were performed. The Wits Student Architecture Film Festival saw the ensemble doing a repeat performance of one of my own compositions, a collaborative multimedia project I had done with an architecture student, Eduardo Cachucho, called *SAGA 631*. Neither of these concerts was affiliated with the Wits Music Department, and for this reason we had to remunerate the musicians for their time.

Funding was a constant problem. Applications for SAMRO funding were submitted and rejected in February, June and September 2008, and it was only in August 2008 that the ensemble finally received its first (and only) sponsorship of R10 000[14], from the Music Department's "Gertrude and Bert Hunt Endowment for the Symphony Orchestra at Wits University" (the Hunt Fund). SAMRO did not offer any reasons for denying our proposals, simply saying, "We regret to inform you that your request for … sponsorship has not been approved by the Board of Trustees" (SAMRO Letter of Funding Rejection April 2008).

The lack of funding throughout most of the ensemble's existence has had a huge impact on the way in which it was run and the ability to carry out our aims. Despite it, we did apparently have a "positive effect" on the Wits Music Department as we gave "student composers an additional opportunity ... [to have] their works performed or work-

[14] Wits Universities Performing Arts Administration (PAA) charged the WCPE R700 out of this amount to 'put on' the concert, even though no one from the PAA actually managed or attended the event. The Music Department also instructed the PAA to cover the short fall from a previous Wits Music concert using the WCPE money. I stood my ground on this issue and refused to let them use our budget for anything other than our concert. On top of this, 25% tax was deducted, leaving us with just R6 975.00 to hire musicians for an hour long performance and enough rehearsal time to do justice to the works performed.

shopped" (Jeanne Zaidel-Rudolph, Author's Interview). On top of this, we learnt that "Wits Music is presently enjoying the status as a place to come to study composition … there is no other university in South Africa at present that presents students' composition portfolios in concert as extensively and as often as Wits Music does" (Ibid). This perception was undoubtedly strengthened by the WCPE's regular Lunch Hour Concerts which we made a point of thoroughly advertising through the various new music networks the participants are a part of. In addition, the WCPE allowed Wits composers the opportunity to forge relationships with the musicians who would perform their works in the public composition examinations called 'Sound Us Out', and 'test drive' pieces for this concert.[15] The WCPE also prepared student performers for presenting new music. Grant Mowatt, the WCPE's resident percussionist, commented that his experience with the ensemble had taught him how to play "with a conductor and … with different percussion instruments [while] reading a score". Having access to experienced performance students cut down on the number of professional musicians that had to be hired for the Sound Us Out concerts – Grant Mowatt performed in both of 2008's Sound Us Out concerts and was paid the nominal fee of R200 in July and R250 in November – this is in contrast to the professional percussionist hired for Sound Us Out for R2000.

By the time the WCPE received the R10 000 (R6 975.00) we were already in the process of wrapping things up for the end of the year. The Wits academic year ended on the 10th of October, and composers and performers usually involved in the group were already preparing for exams, finishing off theses, or preparing for the Sound Us Out exam recital on the 4th of November. In order to make use of this funding I had to schedule a final WCPE concert on the 25th of November, very late in the year (see Chapter 4).

Sound Us Out acted as the composition exam for final year BMus and postgraduate students. This concert was originally presented just once a year each November, but in 2008, due to the increased number of composition students[16], and my willingness to

[15] Sound Us Out received generous funding from organisations like Distell and the Rupert Foundation because they were 'official' concerts of the Music Division, allowing students to hire professional musicians to perform their works alongside the student musicians from the WCPE.

[16] During 2008 there were two BMus composition students, and another BMus student who did a half course in composition. In addition to this there were three MMus composition students and a DMus composition student who had works performed. Examination through performance happens in a rather haphazard manner at postgraduate level. The syllabus states that two-thirds of the portfolio should be presented at MMus level (*Graduate Studies Handbook* 2008, 144), but some students do not get the

organise an additional SUO concert on behalf of the department, two concerts were presented – one in July and the other in November. Although these concerts are not strictly speaking WCPE events, then, they did involve the same people and similar problems so can be regarded as part of an expanded WCPE culture as far as this ethnography is concerned.

During the interview process I found that very few composers had previously thought about how they construct their identity. In response to the questions 'what do you feel your music says about you?', 'what does your music say about your nationality or heritage?', and 'do you feel a responsibility to consciously say something through your music?', every interviewee answered as if they had never considered these questions before. Some seemed uninterested in seeking answers, content to take refuge in a language-based way of speaking that does not demand a consciousness of time and place. This obliged me to reflect carefully on how I first came to think about these questions myself.

Many of the debates surrounding contemporary South African art music that I was exposed to through my undergraduate research had a profound effect on the way in which I now compose. It was not until I had read the literature around this genre and understood the difficulty in expressing a postcolonial identity through a Western medium that I even asked myself 'what does it mean to be a South African art music composer?' I thought it important to share these ideas with my peers and have tried to engage other young composers in this debate. The operation of the WCPE is a central subject of this research, but it is ultimately the individual composers who made up this group and their identities, beliefs and aesthetic views with which I am mostly concerned.

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opportunity to have even one performance. Similarly at doctorate level, only one of the three registered DMus students received the opportunity to present works in performance.

A Subject-centred Ethnography of the WCPE

The main methodologies I employed for this research project were interviewing, participant observation, and journaling. I also used a survey conducted amongst recently graduated Wits composition students (Mullins 2007) and some critical analysis of musical works produced by the ensemble to generate data. I took the WCPE as a type of case study to explore how a group of composers are situating themselves within South Africa. I had immediate access to my 'field' and took advantage of this to provide the reader with an intimate understanding of the creative process the young composers embark on in order to create and ultimately present their works.

What ethnography constitutes as a discipline, the methodologies employed to generate data, never mind the merit of an outsider studying an 'other' or 'own' culture, seem to give rise to arguments that go beyond the scope of this study. As Harry Wolcott puts it, although there are some ethnographers who are interested in what he calls "the *doing* of ethnography", many seem to "devote their energies to worrying it to death … addressing all the cautions as to why one should not" do it at all (1999: 14).

While the idea of conducting an ethnography for this type of research need no longer be seen as problematic, as I have shown in Chapter 1, the idea of ethnomusicology as "the study of music in culture" (Mantle-Hood cited in Nettl 1991: 267), with the concomitant idea that what is studied is large, does need some justification. The contemporary art music community in South Africa is so small, so fragmented and so fraught with infighting that I wonder if it can constitute a 'culture'. Furthermore, my study narrows this field to a tiny group of composers working in a specific location within South Africa over a specific two-year period. Although close in age, members of the WCPE came from a variety of ethnic and economic backgrounds; so how can they be seen to share one specific culture? Moreover, the constraints or boundaries of ethnography become increasingly difficult to define in an age where technological advancements offer access to any culture either directly, through cheap travel and easy access to foreign destinations, or indirectly via the internet and media. Timothy Rice commented as recently as 2003 that the

> mix of cultural and music styles, in versions now endlessly available around the globe, is made possible by colonialism in the first instance and the ubiquity of electronic media in the second. The simultaneity of every place in one place is another marker, in addition to travel in timespace, of modernity all over the world. Although ethnomusicologists are increasingly narrating such stories, the implications of such narratives for theory and method are just beginning to be elucidated (Rice 2003: 154).

No culture is 'uncontaminated', in other words, and this "simultaneity of every place in one place" further problematises the methodology of ethnography by unsettling the "study of music in culture". This cultural contamination also gives rise to the 'magpie effect' mentioned earlier (Stokes 1994: 16) that produces generic, 'non-specific' music. One can access audio files of an endless variety of 'South African music' or 'African music' on the internet and use ideas, sounds, techniques or even quotes from this music without any understanding of where the music came from, what it means to its practitioners and what it stands for: "transformed and reinterpreted in their own terms" (Ibid).

Appadurai argues that we live in "a newly complex world, one that is 'deterritorialized', increasingly made up of wandering migrant labourers, political exiles, war refugees, transnational businessmen, hopeful immigrants, and bourgeois tourists" (in Rice 2003: 153). This 'deterritorialized' state of being is particularly true of Johannesburg and can be seen by simply walking around my 'field', the Wits campus. Here one is exposed to everything from local South African Kwaito to Bach, and a quick trip to the university library allows access to every possible type of music from anywhere in the world with a few clicks of a mouse. How then, can one study 'music in culture' when every culture contains strands of every other culture?

Rice suggests that "a move away from culture to the *subject* as the locus of musical practice and experience may provide a fruitful approach to some of the questions about music that our encounter with the modern world leads us to ask" (Ibid 152; my emphasis). I have found this idea incredibly useful in relation to my work, and expand on it here. What Rice proposes is a new type of ethnography which he refers to as "subject-centered musical ethnography". Here, musical experience is thought of as a three dimensional phenomenon consisting of time, location and musical metaphor (Ibid). Ideas

of time and space have a profound effect on the way we construct our identities, of course. But we also construct space itself. As Rice points out, although 'location' may refer to actual physical places, the idea of musical spaces can also refer to "musical experience as constructed mental locales in which musicians and their audiences imagine themselves experiencing music" (Rice 2003, 161). In my research, I thought of the "constructed mental locale" as the critical space in which young composers could come together and listen to and discuss one another's works. This was not a formal space in which the WCPE participants had to present work or ideas; it was not even a literal space, but rather the perception that we were interested in one another's music and open to the idea of sharing our thoughts, suggestions and opinions.

The third dimension of Rice's "subject-centered musical ethnography", musical metaphor, allows people a greater understanding of music, Rice claims, by bringing it closer to "other domains of human experience" (Ibid 159). Rice identifies the four major music metaphors as "music-as-art", "music-as-social behaviour", "music-as-symbolic system or text capable of reference not only to already existing music but also a world beyond music" and "music-as-commodity" (Ibid 166-167). Each of these metaphors is important in constructing meaning for music and will be examined later in this report, but, with reference to the WCPE. I am particularly interested in the "music-as-social behaviour" metaphor, which generates an understanding of the relationships within the WCPE and how they influenced the creation of new works, as well as the "music-as-symbolic system or text" which assists in examining what young composers feel their music is saying about the time and place in which they live.

The data that is used to construct a "subject-centered musical ethnography" is found in the subjects' personal histories, Rice says. By observing the "interaction of people occupying slightly different subject positions but interacting in time and place" (Ibid 157), the ethnographer can establish how that specific time and place influences the ways in which people compose and experience music. The composers and performers that constitute my subjects come from such a wide variety of social, ethnic and economic backgrounds that they cannot be seen to share a common culture. By examining how these subjects interact within the shared time and place of the WCPE, however, an ethnography can be formed.

It seems particularly close to the world of composition and the world of WCPE when Rice says, "experience is not an inner phenomenon accessible only via introspection to the one having the experience. Rather, experience begins with interaction with a world and with others" (Rice 2003: 157). Each composer or performer who participated in the group constructed the WCPE in a different way. The exchanges and interactions that took place also shaped the identities of the young composers involved. Although this ethnography relies heavily on individual histories it is not only "a documentation of individuality and creative genius (though it could be that) but an account of the social 'authoring' (to use Bakhtin's trope) of the self" (Rice 2003: 157). Rice claims that "the self-reflexive project of self-identity in modernity, understood as a social process, provides the rationale and foundation for subject-centered musical ethnography" (Ibid 158). This model thus compliments my aim by allowing me to examine the identities young composers construct for themselves within the framework of the shared time and place of the WCPE.

The absence of a large-scale or established musical culture in my study becomes, in this view, less problematic. It allows the ethnographer to gain an understanding of a specific musical experience through the interactions of just a few self-reflexive individuals, working within the constraints of this time – which is a particularly interesting one both locally, as I have pointed out, and globally – and place – which can be thought of in both physical terms (Wits University/Johannesburg) and as an imagined locale (the creative space the WCPE offers). What Rice is extending here is Slobin's notion that "we are all individual music cultures" (cited in Rice 2003: 156), and it is by examining the way in which these few individual cultures interact and collide that I believe I may be able to suggest what the music of young South African composers is saying about the time and place in which they live.

I conducted interviews with representatives from three groups of people: first, those between 18 and 32 in (or in the immediate vicinity of) the WCPE: Annemari Ferreira, Vusi Ndebele, Matthew Klawansky, Kerryn Tracey and Constantina Caldis, each of whom was asked the same set of questions (see Appendix 4). This is my generation: composers who started their careers in the 'New South Africa' and whom my main

research question concerns. Second, I interviewed representatives from the two generations of composers preceding my generation, which I divided into the '30s-40s' age group and '50s-60s'. The former included Mokale Koapeng, Kate Trump, Clare Loveday, Paul Hanmer and Dimitri Vodouris, all active composers whose works have been performed in South Africa and further afield, and based in Johannesburg. The questions I asked this group are similar to those of the 18-32s and provided useful comparison between composers who worked through (or at least studied through) apartheid and those who did not (see Appendix 5).

The third group, the '50s-60s' group, was the smallest and included just Michael Blake and Jeanne Zaidel-Rudolph. Both of these composers are based in Johannesburg and have heard the WCPE on numerous occasions.[17] I asked these composers questions about their perception of the younger generation of composers as well as their experience of composing in South Africa (see Appendix 6). In addition to these interviews, I conducted an email questionnaire with the performers who worked with the WCPE in 2007/8 (see Appendix 3). This questionnaire related to their experiences performing music by young South African composers and performing for South African audiences (see Appendix 7).

In addition, throughout my research in 2008 (and 2007) I was continually involved in the methodology of participant observation, capturing data through journaling. The WCPE was not established with this study in mind, but in response to my BMus research. As I began exploring the identity issues older generations of South African composers were facing I became increasingly aware of the importance of a WCPE-type group for my generation of composers. The journaling I conducted was initially just for my own records, but once I began to see the impact the WCPE was having on young composers I made the decision to conduct this study. I attended the rehearsals of every work performed in concert and made notes, using this data here interpretively, to provide an understanding of the processes young composers go through in order to guarantee a successful performance of their compositions.

[17] Blake has subsequently moved to Cape Town.

I am aware that there is a debate about ways in which the ethnomusicologist contaminates the field he is trying to study in a 'natural state' just by being there and, since I am a young composer and not only a member but the instigator and administrator of WCPE, I have to account for how this has affected my research. In her essay "Fieldwork", Helen Meyers states that "disruption is inevitable when one person studies the private life of another. However artful, the fieldworker can never blend in without a trace" (Meyers 1992: 30). Although I was working in a field I considered my own – my university, the ensemble I had established and run – ethnographic contamination was still a potential problem. I have been present at every rehearsal and every concert, yet as soon as my note pad came out I was setting myself apart as a participant-observer and not just a participant. It was, however, essential for me to be involved in all aspects of these WCPE rehearsals and performances, through which I experienced every angle of the process from conceiving a work to its performance, and the response to it, even though this resulted in my becoming quite emotionally invested in these events – I put my blood, sweat and tears into this ensemble and had to constantly remind myself to examine these experiences objectively and not let my own feelings cloud the information I uncovered. This situation – 'insider syndrome' – can be explained as the "dual identity as a practitioner and a researcher within an ethnographic research study" (Arber 2006: 147). Arber explains how ethnographers in this situation may experience "tension between the roles of researcher and practitioner during fieldwork" and may experience "difficulties ... [in] managing the boundary between closeness and distance in terms of the observer and participant roles adopted" (Ibid).

Rooney (further) argues that one of the main concerns with insider research is the question of validity: "The validity of insider research, particularly in qualitative studies, is subjected to endless debate and scrutiny and it presents numerous unanswered questions" (2005: 3). These questions include, "What effect does the researcher's insider status have on the research process?", "Is the validity of the research compromised?", "Can a researcher maintain objectivity?", "Is objectivity necessary for validity?" and "Does the researcher's relationships with subjects have a negative impact on the subject's behavior such that they behave in a way that they would not normally?" (Ibid 3-15).

Although these problems arise in insider research, Rooney argues that "these issues ... should be considered in all research regardless of the researcher's position" (Ibid 15). Furthermore, Arber suggests that the "methods of reflexive accounting enhance the credibility of such a study" (2006: 147), by allowing the reader access to a firsthand account of the experiences presented in the ethnographic study.

I chose to conduct a *critical* ethnography so that the experience and knowledge gained through the WCPE could be appraised. By critiquing the activities of the ensemble, the group's successes in some areas and failures in others are revealed. In this way, this ethnography might act not only as a record but also as a model for other contemporary music performance ensembles to develop.

Chapter 3

The Wits Contemporary Performance Ensemble and the Ethnographic Field

Many violent shifts and changes have occurred in South Africa since the first democratic elections in 1994 and although the country has made huge steps in unifying its people, it is still "one of the most diverse countries in the world – with four broad racial groupings (including three minorities), 11 official languages, a huge gap between rich and poor, and growing communities of migrants and immigrants" (Alexander 2006). Fran Blandy describes the anxieties around (white) identity construction as follows:

> In the 13 years since the demise of the apartheid regime, which relegated black people to a second-class status, about 400 000 white people have voted with their feet and deserted the rainbow nation – usually for Anglophone countries such as Australia, New Zealand, Canada and Britain. But while hundreds of thousands have chosen to shake off their African heritage, the five million white people remaining in South Africa battle conceptions about the purity of their motives in the fight to be classified as African (Blandy 2007).

Although these feelings of anxiety do surround the construction of identity in South Africa, Mary Alexander, writing in 2006, reflects on the progress made around issues of identity in the last decade. Alexander states that "since the end of apartheid there has been a growing sense of nationhood in this race-conscious country, with most of all these different people seeing themselves as primarily South African – not as members of a specific racial or ethnic group" (Alexander 2006). She quotes several figures proving that, since the year 2000, the number of South Africans who identify themselves according to race and not nationality, dropped from 44% to 4%. 53% of the people in this country now identify themselves as South African, and a further 18% identify themselves as African (Ibid). Despite this progress, South Africa is still haunted by its political past, continuously trying to right the wrongs of pre-1994 society.

This cultural dynamic has a profound influence on the identity of all citizens of the country, including its art music composers, whose situation is further complicated by the positions their genre held under the apartheid regime. In the preface to *World Music, Politics and Social Change*, Mellers and Martin comment that "even the solitary

composer, who may think his personal motivation is to transcend the society he finds himself in, owes his 'loneness' to the world that made him" (Mellers and Martin in Frith 1989: ix). Through my interviews I found that several of the young composers I interviewed did not want to be a perceived as a 'South African composer'. The fact that these composers negate their nationality, however, says as much about their feelings towards their home as the music of composers who chose to be overtly 'African'. Many composers feel that they need to construct a particular identity, be it local or international, in order to attract an audience, be considered relevant by their peers, be seen to be politically correct, receive commissions and performances, and create market viability. As a result of these factors the contemporary art music field in South Africa has become a highly contested space. Composers are incredibly possessive of their territory and fiercely guard the places they have carved out for themselves.

The young composers who make up the WCPE set out to change this. We were all aware that there were problems within the art music community, difficulties in having works performed, malevolence amongst the generations of composers above us. But we felt that by banding together and forming a community based on a preconcerted spirit of sharing and generous reciprocity, we would be able to carve out a place for ourselves where we could learn and grow as young composers. These good intentions were unfortunately much harder to implement than we had anticipated. The WCPE participants, myself included, seemed to become increasingly dismayed as we realised the extent and far reaching effect of the problems of our discipline.

This dismay and the reasons for the growing feelings of defeat or helplessness were evident throughout the interviews I conducted with the young composers and performers of the WCPE. Along with the disappointment and anxiety evident in this data, the interviewees expressed a strong desire for change, for a break with the past and the situation where composers need to construct a contrived identity in order to survive the hostile environment presented to art music composers.

The questions that I asked in the interviews were designed to establish what identity young composers were trying to construct for themselves, yet during these interviews, as well as other interviews with established composers, I was able to identify several

recurring themes that revolved around perceived threats or stumbling blocks in the field. I believe it is imperative to examine these perceived stumbling blocks, as it is this field that shapes the young composers emerging out of South Africa, and in which I conduct my ethnographic fieldwork. Along with the perceived threats or 'hindering forces', the interviewees also mentioned several 'helping forces' which assisted in their growth – although there are (depressingly) significantly less positives than negatives. The stumbling blocks identified are best expressed as a series of lacks: lack of the right kind of knowledge acquired in training, lack of support from the established generations of composers, a dire lack of funding, the lack of a committed art music audience in South Africa, the lack of a cohesive community amongst composers in which ideas can be shared, a lack of performers willing and able to play new music, and the lack of infrastructure to support contemporary art music generally.

The young composers who have completed university degrees, and can therefore be seen as being at least basically 'qualified', feel that their education has not supplied them with adequate tools to become composers. There seemed to be a general feeling of anxiety when they were asked if they felt they could compete on the same level or standard as composers trained at international (Western) institutions. Because they work in a location so far removed from what are seen as the centres of innovation and progress – Europe and North America – many feel that they, and their teachers, are out of touch with what is going on in the international art music scene.

> I think the preparation at Wits has been pretty crap, even in South Africa. Some of my friends want to go to overseas universities and the first things they tell them is to go brush up on their theory! First thing! They [at Wits] keep hampering on twelve-tone stuff, modes you know, and it's relevant obviously to know about it, but not to keep writing in it because that's not what composers are doing today and that's not where music is going. It's going in completely different directions. Most composers are focusing on completely different matters (Annemari Ferreira).

Clare Loveday, a doctoral composition student and former theory and composition lecturer at Wits University, also thinks it is

> important for students to know that the art music scene overseas is really exciting and invigorating and they have no sense of that. I think universities should be making a concerted effort to expose students to international ensembles and to

> contemporary composition thinking and how performers of contemporary music are thinking, internationally, 'cause it's so exciting.

The way in which composition is taught at university is brought into question by several interviewees. Clare Loveday commented that she believes that "theory should be taught through composition … I don't think it works to tell people this is how it should be done, then lift the lid on the box of imagination and say okay now you can step out; because people are then tied into expectations and structures".

In the Wits Music Department, the syllabus for the composition specialisation that a student can elect to do in their fourth year of BMus grows directly out of a theory of music course (Composition Techniques and Form, known colloquially as CTF), which deals with topics such as four-part harmony, sonata form, counterpoint and serialism. The techniques and aesthetics of composition are not taught as part of this course and thus it is possible for a student to choose a fourth year composition major having composed not much more than a sixteen-bar serialism exercise.

> We were never asked to write our own music in first or second year as assignments. Our CTF assignments in third year were all technique based. The most original things we did I think were short exercises in twelve-tone harmony, so I felt there wasn't enough time dedicated to writing original material. I don't believe I was prepared enough when entering my fourth year (Constantina Caldis).

In fourth year students are taught in two separate courses, one a theoretical course which deals with Schenkerian analysis and pitch set analysis, and the other a composition course. The theoretical course is purely technical and, in my experience (class of 2007), was never related to the creative work composers were trying to produce. The composition course was conducted as a seminar where the few students (roughly three or four per year) gathered together and presented pieces or sections of pieces they had been working on. These classes rarely included discussions of compositional techniques, methods or aesthetics, and consisted of a 'show-and-tell' type session followed by brief comments and editing by the lecturer. These comments and changes took place on the material level only and aesthetic ideas or justifications were rarely mentioned by the lecturer, Prof. Jeanne Zaidel-Rudolph. Kerryn Tracey explains the process of creating her fourth year portfolio:

> I don't know if it's the way she works with people in general, or just me, or who I am, but I do a lot of my work on my own. Like, I really didn't show her much of my work until it was done; and she obviously makes a few tweaks, and you're like, 'wow, that's ten thousand times better'. Just moving an octave or changing an interval. But ja, she's kind of left me to do … (Kerryn Tracey).

This dissatisfaction with composition training at Wits was echoed by many young composers that I interviewed or surveyed. I am aware that the answers I received in response to the questions of identity I asked, are just the perceptions of my interviewees – interviewees working in a hostile environment that demands a certain ruthlessness and awareness of (and allegiance within) the politics of the field. For this reason, I thought it essential to address the issues with composition training with Jeanne Zaidel-Rudolph, who has been teaching at Wits University since 1976, so that a balanced argument could be presented. In my interview with Zaidel-Rudolph I asked what her teaching philosophy was. She outlined this as follows: "young composers need to be nurtured in such a way that they learn to master and respect the parameters and materials of their art, and a good teacher of composition integrates this knowledge with a profound desire to potentialise the true individual voice of the gifted composer".

I first began studying with Zaidel-Rudolph in the third year of my BMus degree (2006). She supervised my final fourth year portfolio (2007) as well as parts of my MMus composition portfolio (2008). I thus found it interesting that she struck such a distant tone when answering my interview questions, particularly this one where I, as her student, asked her, as my teacher, to explain her teaching methodology. Zaidel-Rudolph went on to offer a critique of the music her students were creating, which almost supports her students' claim that they were not exposed to enough contemporary art music before they were expected to create a portfolio of their own.

> I find that young composers are generally lacking in the courage to forge fresh and meaningful new musical paths and to come to terms with their strengths and weaknesses in an honest way. 'Experimental interdisciplinary work' is a buzz-word used today as though this is a new art-form that has just emerged; it is dressed up as being current and cutting edge, but in reality is just a re-hash of what was being done (and with much greater competence) in Darmstadt 35 years ago. What I as an experienced composer observe in some new works today, is a pretentious and watered-down version of Murray Schaeffer's approach to sound, found in his "Ear-Cleaning" and the "Rhinoceros in the Classroom" books, which addresses the realm of sound in a creative manner, but which is essentially

> directed at teaching kids at primary and secondary school levels. So I am disappointed in the lack of real imagination and 'daring' one would expect of emerging young composers of worth. My contemporaries and I wrote courageously experimental works which pushed the envelope technically and musically yet still displayed quintessential music.

In response to this comment, and to the several negative accounts of composition training at Wits that I received from the WCPE composers, I conducted a follow-up interview with Zaidel-Rudolph, asking *how* she nurtured her students and encouraged them to express an individual voice or identity. Her response was: "I have neither the time nor the need to explain myself since my results with students speak for themselves".

Tracey's comment that she was left to do most of her composing on her own was echoed by several interviewees. Composers were left to learn for themselves, and thus the WCPE played an important role in this education process. Despite the progress young composers were able to make on their own, however, the lack of guidance and direction left them with a sense of self-doubt and uncertainty about what they were doing both technically and aesthetically.

This perceived lack of the technical skills required to adequately compete on international standards results in some young composers trying to compensate for this by constructing a certain identity, I suggest. The feeling among my peer interviewees seems to be that, although young South African composers cannot be better (or as good) as their international counterparts, they can be different or 'other'. When asking whether composers ever incorporated African elements, ideas or material into their works, several interviewees displayed a disdain for the notion of being overtly African in their writing, yet admitted that, if they were to go overseas, they may resort to composing in this way as they thought of this as the only way to be recognised or 'stand out' as a composer in a larger field. This ambivalence is challenged by Robert Fokkens:

> If you are prepared to play by the rules as set out by the West – particularly in terms of your identity – you can perhaps achieve broad 'international' success. If, however, you choose to explore your identity honestly and on your own terms, you might find that this market is suddenly a lot less interested in you. This is interesting, as the pressure which seemed to be born purely from internal searching for a South African identity – and which appears to cause so much acrimony within South Africa – is revealed as at least partly an external,

> commercial pressure for an internationally marketable commodity. In this context, as in my examination of the internal pressures, I think it is infinitely more important that we explore our own individual and complex voices – whatever they may be, and from whatever sources they spring – rather than trying to adopt voices that are alien to who we are, with the inevitably problematic results that this achieves (2004: 106).

Each of the composers I interviewed expressed a desire to reach international audiences. This seemed to be a common goal and measure of success. A number of my interviewees mentioned Kevin Volans as the model South African composer even though he does not live or work in South Africa. Volans has had tremendous success as a composer and is the "only South African to have made a significant impact on the 'international scene' thus far", although as Fokkens points out, this success was initially gained by "importing 'black African' sounds, songs and techniques into Western music" (2005, 105).

This sets up a struggle between the two types of composition identities explored in Chapter 1. Young South African composers want to subscribe to the ideals of type 2, where composers do not set out to be overtly African, yet seem to feel they have to 'cash in' on their otherness in order to compensate for their education.

As the assessment for the fourth-year composition course, students are expected to produce a portfolio at the end of a year. About half of this portfolio is presented in concert ('Sound Us Out', mentioned above) and as I discovered in my BMus research was, for most students, the first and last time their works were performed in public (Mullins 2007: 89-90). These concerts are usually rather chaotic with a ridiculously long programme, and not enough rehearsal time for music that is often – due to a lack of performance experience on the composers' parts – not easily playable. Constantina Caldis felt "there could have been more compositions, like, every week we should have been writing something. We were expected to do one lump sum at the end". There was no opportunity for composition students to learn and grow from their mistakes.

Several composers therefore felt the need to supplement their university training by taking private composition lessons with teachers who were more in touch with international compositional trends, taking part-time courses in orchestration through UNISA, and studying in other fields in order to gain work in the composition industry.

> After the postgraduate diploma [in composition from Wits] I went to go try find work and just realised that I needed more ability within a studio because I want to write music for film. So I needed the technical side of things, not just the musical side. I found this sound engineering course [offered by the] academy of sound engineering, and I've spent two years with them. I'm finishing the diploma right now (Constantina Caldis).

Like her I have realised that writing music is only one small part of being a composer. In order to become a working composer, one has to be able to adapt to a number of different roles, which range from relevant tasks such as conducting and to less and less relevant ones such as venue booking, financial management, or catering. On signing up for my BMus degree I never imagined I would have to manage a budget, fight for funding, draw up invoices, stack chairs after a concert until midnight, drive a flatbed truck stacked to overflowing with percussion instruments and music stands, or sort out a rehearsal schedule for 25 busy musicians involved in 12 different ensembles. But these are some of the skills I have had to learn. They are just as, if not more, important than sound engineering and conducting, and certainly more useful than the harmony and counterpoint, basic orchestration and serialism – the only composition training offered at Wits. The goal of composition training at Wits seems to be 'getting a degree': performance is treated as a method of evaluating composition, and is not included in composition training. This does not prepare students for a professional career in composition.

The lack of institutional support for new contemporary South African art music is another challenge. Annemari Ferreira comments that:

> unless Wits starts to focus its support more in the line of these groups, in terms of financial aid, in terms of academic support, I mean unless Wits gets involved it will just dissipate and disappear. There's no way, without you we would never have had a start, never mind continuing. I mean it's really ridiculous the way it's been done so far. Not only is there a problem with hiring professional musicians when the musicians are not there, but that's an entirely different matter. Some of the instruments aren't up to scratch, aren't available, aren't there even though your performance is due to start in ten minutes …

The university or academy can be seen as a safe-haven for new music (Babbitt 1998: 40), but I found very little value ascribed to this product at Wits – the only institution to offer art music composition training in Johannesburg. Pooley found the Johannesburg

Philharmonic Orchestra (another type of institution) uninterested in, even hostile to, new music (2008: 143), and SAMRO, which one would expect to uphold the interests of art music composers, was seen by one of my informants as not supportive of new South African compositions.

> I am not impressed with the position of SAMRO when it comes to new music. You know, I attended the international singing bursaries [competition]. I was flabbergasted by the fact that [singers] only had [to sing] one prescribed song … I think they used three or four composers: Carlo Mombelli, Hendrik Hofmeyer, and two more composers … Each singer had to sing one South African song, and three or four whatever, you know, they sang the Bellini, the Mozarts. I found that very very strange that SAMRO has to use the composers' royalties to fund people who are still singing the Mozarts and all that … I am not charmed … I think it's a wrong investment … to me it doesn't really make sense (Mokale Koapeng).

Most students felt that their teachers or mentors should be more involved in the process of preparing for a performance. Receiving guidance and feedback from someone experienced in the field is invaluable, but is not often on offer. Students are left to fend from themselves, as I discovered, when the programme for one of the WCPE's lunch hour concerts was so empty that I resorted to quickly finishing the last two movements of a piano piece I had only just started. Due to the amount of time I had to spend making arrangements for the concert, I was unable to do the piece justice, and produced a work that I was not particularly happy with. I managed to finish it just in time for the performance, but unfortunately the pianist did not have much time to practise it. The result was that a fast-slow-fast movement piece of seven minutes was presented in an agonising twelve minute performance where the movements were slow-slower-slowest. I promised myself never to let a work that was not ready for public presentation be performed again. This was a very valuable lesson to learn but with the guidance of a teacher who had been involved throughout the rehearsal process the pianist and I could have avoided this situation. I often think of the mistakes I have made and the bad performances I have had as the best lessons learnt. But limited funding, performers who are not willing to give more than an hour of their time for a rehearsal and a dwindling audience that is not entirely convinced they even like art music, makes guidance and support from an experienced composer incredibly valuable. Every composer I interview commented similarly on a perceived lack of support:

> The lecturers are only involved in so far as coming to the concerts. As long as they can be at the concert when it's being performed and listen, and give their little tit-bit comments, you know ... It's not as though the lecturers themselves are intimately involved in the process – and they should be. So I think in order for this to develop further, you need them in those workshops, in those rehearsals. For me, that's the integral part … because they are the people who are supposed to be guiding you. And if they don't have people who can guide you then they should get more staff who can handle that (Annemari Ferreira).

The only other music department in South Africa that has a dedicated new music ensemble is at Stellenbosch University. This ensemble, which is called KEMUS, is however different in that it is not dedicated to performing only student works but also general contemporary art music repertoire. Another major difference, one that I argue has resulted in greater recognition and sustainability, is that KEMUS is run by a member of staff, Theo Herbst (http://academic.sun.ac.za/musteg/kemus/#top, accessed 28 December 2008). Herbst lectures 19th and 20th century music theory, composition, orchestration and aural training at the university and has been involved with the ensemble since 1994, taking over as musical director in 2002 (Ibid).

The absence of experienced composers guiding the WCPE has resulted in young composers becoming rather disheartened and unsure of the value of what they are doing. Although Zaidel-Rudolph commented that "Talent needs guidance in meaningful directions so as not to just slavishly follow fashion in order to be trendy or worse, 'relevant' (a term bandied about as though it defines the *quality* of all art, yet its proponents have not yet clarified its meaning or context – socially, politically musically – all? none?)", the young composers of the WCPE were crying out for guidance: yet not one WCPE rehearsal was attended by a Wits member of staff[18]. The idea of relevance was a topic frequently discussed amongst the WCPE composers, too, with several young composers concurring that, when living and working in a Third World country where thousands of citizens do not have a roof over their heads or food in their stomachs, one cannot demand funding for music that says absolutely nothing about the place and

[18] There have been very generous, experienced individuals who are not associated with Wits who have offered advice, guidance and feedback, but this involvement, as well as the presence of these individuals at WCPE events, has been frowned upon by the department and branded 'disgusting' and 'unethical'. The seeking of 'outside' help has resulted in much friction within the music department and severe repercussions for the young composers associated with these 'unwelcome parties' (Jeanne Zaidel-Rudolph pers. comm.).

circumstances in which it was composed. Discussions of relevance with experienced composers could have been incredibly useful because, as is stated by Zaidel-Rudolph, there is still much unclarity about the meanings of this term, how it should be manifest on a practical or material level, and the ways in which this desire could be incorporated into contemporary South African art music aesthetics.

There are institutions that do offer support to young art music composers through annual gatherings and workshops. These institutions, such as NewMusicSA (NMSA), which according to its website aims among other things to "encourage the development of South African composers and the creation of new works [and] develop a critical climate in which all aspects of contemporary music can be discussed" (NMSA Mission Statement http://www.newmusicsa.org.za, accessed 16 October 2007), are few and far between, and also rather poorly supported. Former NMSA president Chris Walton states that a "lack of resources and of general interest are both a problem. New music isn't popular anywhere in the world, and given the general problems art music has in SA, it's always going to be more difficult here". Walton continued saying that if NMSA had more money they could run "more workshops, more concerts, more outreach, [make] more attempts to cast the net widely to encourage young composers, especially from the disadvantaged communities". This highlights another one of the major stumbling blocks for young composers that goes hand in hand with the problem of institutional support – funding.

"You know, it all boils down to money. I mean, if NewMusicSA had more money, they could run two Indabas a year" (Clare Loveday). There are organisations (such as SAMRO and the NAC (National Arts Council)) that one may apply to, but I have found them quite wary of granting money to younger, inexperienced composers; a problem I will investigate further in this chapter. Lack of funding not only makes the presentation and production of new works difficult, it even has a limiting influence on composers' creativity. Electro-acoustic composer Dimitri Voudouris commented "I feel that were funding available for projects like this much more could be done. More to say, more on the education level, triggering off into the performance level".

Lack of funding converts into lack of time for composition. Each of the recently 'qualified' composers I interviewed said that they were unable to support themselves just

through their compositional activities and had to work in related fields such as teaching or conducting or even far removed fields such as pharmaceuticals. Mokale Koapeng finds it a major distraction:

> I've come to realize one cannot earn a living through composing. I've had situations in some of the projects I get involved in [where] people that I know had to impose my works, you know, persuade some person to commission me. I'd say, you know, I'd love to write this kind of work for your festival. Then I have, in a way, had to develop the ability to defend, substantiate and put a position. On the other hand, I try to put some proposals together, I mean the call I had earlier on is for a project that's supposed to be funded by some people and I've been battling with them since 2005, but I still believe I will get money from them. I mean those are some of the circumstances that I particularly find myself. I cannot talk for other composers, but from what I see for most of us, except if you go into the jazz arena but even then you have to be a good performer. In my case, I have to conduct, I have to work as a consultant, I have to advise people, run workshops and all that. A whole lot of things that distract me, that move me away from what I'd really love to do …

Clare Loveday explains how she "spent 6 months composing *Blink* and R7 000 getting to Vienna for a one-off 10-minute performance of a work for which [she] was only paid a nominal fee by Ensemble Reconsil [the ensemble that performed the work]". In the end she "made a profit of approximately R1000, once expenses had been covered" (Loveday 2007: 2).

Similarly, when I was asked to put on a performance of *SAGA 631* at the Wits Architecture Students Film Festival in July 2008 I did so without hope of capital gain. We were asked to 'open' the event and I was paid a fee of R1000 for the use of my composition. My duties included rewriting the piece for a smaller ensemble (so as to be able to hire enough musicians for just R1000), printing scores and parts, setting up rehearsals (a task that requires hours of phone calls), setting up the stage, organising lighting by which the performers could read the music, and conducting the piece. Printing the scores and parts cost me just under R90 and I rang up a hefty phone bill after having to reschedule one rehearsal several times. On top of this, I gave several days of my time to rewrite the piece and put the performance together, yet after paying each of the eight musicians their R120 fee – an amount with which they were rather unimpressed – I was left with only R40 to cover the printing and phone call costs – resulting in me actually losing money.

Funding has always been a problem for new music composers, but in more recent years the sharp decline of opportunities available to composers has further complicated the process of being a working South African composer. Zaidel-Rudolph, who "started out as a young composer nearly 40 years ago", commented:

> Times were different yet there was still a general apathy (and even resistance) towards new music. Concerts of new music were very poorly patronized and obtaining funding for these was a problem. However there seemed to be more opportunities – mainly for white composers. The main broadcaster, SABC made provision for the handful of competent white South African composers to be commissioned, performed and recorded … Those were the days when one could get one's orchestral pieces performed and recorded by professional orchestras. That seldom happens today – the economy hardly allows for that.

The lack of a committed art music audience is another problem young composers deal with. Clare Loveday explains that "there is a small … very committed audience … but its small and people are not exposed to new music so when they do hear it they hate it". The problem of the audience presents itself as a vicious circle. Audience members generally do not like art music, so very little of it is played. When some art music is played, the audience is unfamiliar with it and therefore finds it rather strange and generally do not like it. Other problems surrounding the audience emerge out of the question – 'which audience?' Different groups of people, even different individuals, bring varied sets of expectations to the genre of art music. The general public, for example, expects music to be lyrical or beautiful, while an academic audience expects music to break boundaries and align itself with certain aesthetic ideals. Annemari Ferreira explains how she has grappled with this issue:

> Actually we've had a really interesting discussion about this in English, about books being written for the public and books being written for academia to say, you know, look how clever I am ... I don't like putting things into boxes, I don't like limiting myself by focusing on one area. I love writing songs that people can enjoy because first of all, let's face it, it's commercial, I can go and make money off it. Secondly, I don't see why my creation should be focused at the academic realm when there are so many other people who can listen to my work ... Academia often limits you. The people who are at the top want certain things and you can't give them anything else or anything other than what they want and that is often the case. It's very subjective, as music always obviously is, but for me the commercial public realm is less limiting. I don't have to think: okay I want to

> write this now and have to write that now. I can write anything as long as it fits into the contexts of what I'm working on at that moment …

Audience reception is obviously linked to the kind of performance a composer gets. No matter how good a written composition is, it is the performance that the audience ultimately responds to. Many composers expressed a desire to communicate something to their audience through the music they were writing. The composer, however, has no control over how this message is conveyed and must rely on the performer to communicate with the audience. If the performer is not confident with the material in the work, or has not taken the time to properly understand and interpret the work, the intended meaning can be completely lost. As Kate Trump commented: "one of my compositions was played so abysmally that you couldn't even tell what it was".

I have found very few musicians who are willing to play new music. Many student musicians belong to classical or jazz ensembles which they participate in for musical enjoyment or as a hobby. When it comes to contemporary music however, very few of them are willing to play unless they are being paid. As I have already shown, funding opportunities for contemporary South African art music are hard to come by, so some young composers have to resort to paying for rehearsals or performances out of their own pocket. Constantina Caldis expressed her desire to have her music performed, but explained:

> You can't afford the musicians. There's no money to pay musicians. Other thing is there aren't musicians willing to play your music. The ones who are aren't willing to do it properly. I've found the classical musicians, they just want to play their Beethoven and their Bach and their normal straightforward stuff, so when you give them a piece of modern music they go aagh! *(laughs)*

Commenting on the same topic, Dimitri Voudouris explained how most established ensembles are "not interested. They're just interested in making day to day contributions, you know, playing what's on the radio. The Sontonga Quartet[19], they're amazing, but they play Reich, they play Riley, they play Glass. That's it you know".

The ability of local performers was also brought into question by several interviewees. There are obviously many exceptionally talented performers in South Africa, but most

[19] The Sontanga Quartet disbanded in 2006.

performers, particularly when it comes to ensemble playing, cannot cope with the demands of new music. Clare Loveday's *Blink*, which she wrote for Vienna, was unusual for her:

> I think I composed differently in that I know that the standard of player is so much higher, especially if you're writing for big ensembles. I mean, you know, if you're writing for Jill Richards you can write whatever you want 'cause she's so fantastic, or for Magda de Vries. But writing for an ensemble like that, yes I definitely wrote it differently from how I'd write it for a local performance.

The need for a cohesive art music community was expressed by all of the composers I interviewed. As it stands, the current art music community is a rather hostile environment full of politics and infighting – or in Chris Walton's harsher terms: "On the whole, I think they hate each other". This hostile environment can be linked to the lack of support and funding, says Kerryn Tracey: "Because of the limited support that arts and culture get in South Africa there is only limited space, and that space is pretty much taken. And then because of that there is so much infighting and politics and it's such a limited space. I find it so aggravating".

The limited funding, resources and institutional support on offer to South African composers result in most of them becoming fiercely protective of the space they have created for themselves. The harsh conditions for composers in post-apartheid South Africa demand that one fight for a position in this space. This fighting attitude seems to linger on once the composer has achieved the desired position; most established composers seem more intent on defending their positions from newcomers than encouraging young composers. Kerryn Tracey offered valuable insight on her experience of trying to find a place for herself in the art music composition field when I asked whether she imagined a future for herself in South Africa.

> I think that depends on how much you are willing to make space for yourself. Because of the fact that there isn't so much space – and I know that sounds like a big fat contradiction, but what I mean is, it depends on how much I want to fight to decrease the space of the other composers *(laughs)* you know what I'm saying … generally people in South Africa are less willing, less likely to take chances on newcomers. You've got to prove yourself. But how the hell do you do that if you've got to prove yourself *before* you can prove yourself.

This situation is exclusive to South Africa. Although art music does not have a particularly large market anywhere in the world (in comparison to popular music or jazz) there are vibrant and welcoming communities of composers that offer a forum in which to discuss their art and listen to one another's music. Michael Blake discussed his experience: "I lived in London for many many years and there, in fact there are several communities of composers. And I also went over to Europe quite a lot ... and there were groups of composers with whom I could spend nights talking and listening ... people do support each other, and I find that completely missing here".

There are tiny groups of composers that have begun to form – the WCPE obviously being one of them. The annual New Music Indaba has also started to form another very small community of composers willing to converse and share with their colleagues, but this is a small group that predominantly consists of younger, unestablished composers. There is also a different group of composers each year, so the dialogue that is established cannot be maintained. The older generation of South African composers, with a few exceptions such as former NMSA induna Michael Blake, tend to steer clear of these gatherings. "I have to put it down to professional jealousy" says Blake.

Composition graduate and WCPE member Kate Trump demonstrated the need for interaction with other composers when she discussed how she had 'learnt composition'. After explaining how isolated she felt as a composition student and how the majority of the skills she acquired were gained through self study, she went on to say:

> When Dimitri [Voudouris] came I didn't learn composition per se, but I saw how he worked, how his head worked and it was an interesting line. And I'm not sure if I could do that sort of thing, but it was just so interesting to see him in action. Then when [Lukas] Ligeti came out, we did this ad lib kind of thing. We just went and did our own thing, it was completely chaotic, it seemed to have no purpose sometimes, but every now and again something would coalesce and it would be 'wow that's amazing!' Light bulb moment! So I did learn something there. Then there's Carlo [Mombeli]. I don't want to do jazz, I mean I love jazz, but it's not my thing. I interviewed him, and it's just interesting seeing a composer working ... He talked about it, he talked about how things occurred to him, it's just very inspiring …

The interactions that Trump had with these three guest lecturers did not necessarily result in her gaining new technical composition skills, but it did open up her mind to new possibilities, new ideas, new sounds. Composers have the ability to feed off and learn

from one another, and – as I have learnt through my interactions within the WCPE – the discussion of ideas and concepts is an incredibly important part of the growth of any young composer. This kind of forum does not really exist. "I don't think there is a community of composers besides what you've set up with the WCPE. And I feel very flattered that you've asked me time and again because the feeling I often get from my fellow students I did composition with was I was alright to say hello to, but any further discussion becomes a competitive thing" (Kate Trump).

The politics and infighting within the art music composition field does not stop at lack of support and bickering over views and belief systems. My interviewees identified several ways in which composers infringe on one another – some more malicious than others – including the "style police" where composers try to impose their aesthetic views on other composers and discredit works that they do not view as stylistically correct. Young composers are particularly susceptible to this type of manipulation and are often pushed in particular directions by their teachers. As one audience member commented after a Sound Us Out Concert: "a lot of Jeanne's students sound like clones of Jeanne" (Interviewee wishes to remain anonymous).

One of the most malicious manifestations of infighting is the personal attack of a composer – an established composer trying to chase the competition off their field, but sometimes going so far as to stomp on their competitions' toes so they cannot play at all:

> what I'm against is people who basically destroy careers or influence the development of talent. And not because it's for the good of that person but it's good for themselves or good for their images. And that I completely disagree with that and that happens quite a lot. Do I need to say that it happens at Wits? Ja, that's all I'm saying. I'm trying to be politically correct here; it's not so easy… (Interviewee wishes to remain anonymous).

This obviously has a profound affect on the identity young composers construct for themselves. Composers feel forced in certain directions and to represent certain ideals in order to be accepted, receive recognition by certain people, or to be commissioned and receive performances of their works. The lack of willingness to share ideas and experience also affects the identity a composer constructs for himself as there is no forum in which to collectively develop a sense of direction and purpose for contemporary South African identity.

Two important factors that Rice identifies as key to a subject-centered musical ethnography are the "interaction of people" within the field (2003: 157) and the metaphor of "music-as-social behavior" (Ibid 166-167). These two factors obviously rely on the social element of music making – discussion of ideas, listening to one another's works, interaction with performers, critiquing of performances, and suggesting improvements. This social element is vital in the formation of identity, as it allows the young composers, through interaction with their peers, the opportunity to sound out their ideas and form a collective idea of where contemporary South African art music is heading. There is, however, a stark lack of a critical mass of composers in South Africa, making this kind of interaction very difficult.

The miniscule size, as well as the artificial inflation of the contemporary art music field was particularly visible at the CIT:Y Festival, which took place in October 2008. This festival is said to draw "on the extensive number of institutions in Johannesburg that offer young South Africans post-school training in a broad cross section of creative industries", offering prizes and scholarships to "the talented individuals that are preparing for careers in the creative industries". Categories within the competition included design, fine arts, visual arts, broadcasting, multimedia, motion picture, drama, dance and music ("CIT:Y Festival Provides Valuable Platform for Jozi's Young Artists", http://entertainment.bizcommunity.com/?p=1317, accessed 10 December 2008).

"The extensive number of institutions" referred to above were asked to nominate students for these awards and Wits nominated two composers and three performers in the music category. Only one other music student, a guitarist from Damelin College, was nominated. In the composition category one prize was awarded for 'best composition', and a scholarship to go towards continued studies in composition in 2009. Since there were only two composers involved in the competition, myself and Christo Jankowitz, and only one of us was planning to continue studying in 2009, the outcome of competition was already decided before our works were presented. The act of 'auditioning' was merely a formality. There was no sense of competition, no pressure to improve or try harder. Obviously composers may put this kind of pressure on themselves, striving to

improve and stretch their own limits, but I was almost disappointed that I had not really had to work for what I had achieved in this competition.

The small size of the field is not only evident when examining the place of the institution within the larger field of Johannesburg, but also when examining the internal structure of the institution. Chris Walton spoke of the time he spent at Cambridge, commenting: "I was not a composer … though everyone had to learn to compose … and I actually ended up writing a musical and an opera for Christ Church Cathedral School in the late 1980s". Institutions in Europe and the United States of America offer students far more opportunities – such as the chance to write an opera or musical – as there are far more students enrolled in these institutions. On enquiring about the audition process for a masters degree in composition in the United States, I discovered that most institutions insist on an orchestral work – presented in score and recording – to be submitted as part of the audition portfolio. During 2008, there were only nine orchestral instrumentalists enrolled at Wits University at undergraduate level: two flautists, a clarinetist, a trumpeter, three violinists, a violist and a double bassist. The prospect of a composition student writing an orchestral work thus seemed redundant as there were no viable opportunities to have orchestral works performed (Pooley 2008: 143).

Along with the lack of orchestras and other performing bodies, there are other shortcomings in terms of infrastructure that supports the performance of new music. Christine Lucia comments that "[t]here are no designated public spaces on or off campuses in South Africa for the purpose of performing new music; and indeed there are few in the world. Thus the notion of 'significant venues' used by performing rights societies and universities overseas for evaluating outputs (and collecting royalties) is highly problematic" (2005: 99). Thus the few performances young composers do manage to get in South Africa are generally not acknowledged or seen to be unimportant.

In contrast to this situation, the American institution, The Peabody Conservatory, upholds the following philosophy:

> The Peabody Composition Department operates under the practical philosophy of learning music composition by hearing one's works performed. Therefore, the department attempts to have all compositions which are written under faculty

> supervision performed or read at the Conservatory as soon as possible following completion ... There are several readings of orchestral works by the Peabody Symphony Orchestra, a choral reading, and a wind ensemble reading each year ("Peabody Composition". http://pcm.peabody.jhu.edu/composition/composition.html, accessed 10 December 2008).

The small number of students enrolled in South African institutions not only affects performance opportunities for composers, but also results in composers feeling isolated and alone. There were only five students majoring in composition during 2006, four in 2007 and just two in 2008. While an institution such as the Eastman School of Music holds regular master classes and "composition symposiums" ("Eastman School of Music Composition Department", http://www.esm.rochester.edu/composition/home.html, accessed 10 December 2008), students enrolled at Wits do not interact with one another. There were six postgraduate composition students enrolled during 2008, one of whom I, as one of these six students, have never met. Apart from a semester-long course in aesthetics and analysis for masters students, composition students have little to do with one another. A one-hour private supervision session is given to each composer every second week and they are then left to compose in isolation with no interaction with their peers.

Despite all of these negative factors that work against young composers, there are 'helping forces' which have assisted in the growth and development of young talent. Annemari Ferreira comments:

> I've had really really good relationships with the musicians I've worked with. Sometimes I've had experiences, I'm sure you have as well, with musicians not pitching, but that's a different matter. It's not a problem with their relationship with the music, generally it's a problem with the musician. But I find that the students and artists at Wits have been very open to performing these works, well the ones I've worked with at least. They want to do it. They enjoy the experience and that makes it more enjoyable for me, because when people like playing your music it make you feel good. It really does. Because it shows you that, as an audience, they also respond to what you write. And if they enjoy it, the public audience will also enjoy your music. It's a cyclical thing – then you want to write again because you've had a good experience.

Kerryn Tracey echoed this sentiment acknowledging that while she had also had difficult experiences with performers with bad attitudes, some performers "have been really cool

and really open to saying they really like this, or you could be more whatever here because the instrument can do more", expressing how much she had enjoyed working when "it's like both of you are working on something and working to make it great".

The NMSA organisation has also had a very positive influence on young composers, offering opportunities to interact with international composers and performers through workshops and performances by professional new music ensembles. Another outcome of the annual New Music Indaba is a feeling of community, if only for the week that the composers come together. The 2008 New Music Indaba took place in the first week of September, and as I drove home from the final event I remember experiencing a feeling of sadness that I would no longer get to spend time sharing with and learning from the people I had met during the week.

As can be seen by the evidence presented in this chapter, young composers perceive their world as a dark and threatening place where the chances of success seem highly unlikely. Despite this, they chose to soldier on, pursuing a career in composition, trying to carve out a place for themselves in this unwelcoming world.

Chapter 4

The WCPE: A Retrospective Critique

Having read the previous chapter, one would be forgiven for thinking that any young musician who chooses art music composition as a career is crazy – why go into this field when the odds are so against you? The notion of writing art music seems an irrelevant and unprofitable project. 'Does anyone actually listen to that type of music?' is the stock question that accompanies the almost sympathetic smiles and nods that I usually receive when I say I am a composer.

The difficulty of composition as a career is heightened by the politics of the field as outlined in the previous chapter. Not only is it difficult to write music and have it performed, but you also have to contend with someone perhaps trying to discredit and put down anyone who may threaten them.

As I conducted my interviews and found the recurring themes of perceived threats or lacks I became increasingly disheartened. I had been aware there were problems, but when I wrote them out all together I was shocked by the length of the list. 'Is it really that bad?' I asked myself. The answer that my data kept pointing to was: yes. As I continued with my WCPE projects in 2008 I found myself increasingly asking, then: why am I bothering? Is it actually possible to get anywhere in this field? Do I really want to spend my life fighting for recognition amongst competitive colleagues?

In my informal discussions with WCPE members I found that I was not the only one grappling with these issues. And many young composers were asking themselves the same question: why do I compose? The answers were surprisingly similar:

> Well, on the one hand, I think that is something that I have to do. I mean, it's not *have to* in terms of deadlines and work and because I'm doing composition. I mean like it's like something I'm driven to do … Composition is the creative outlet, and if I'm not creating something I feel very trapped (Kerryn Tracey).

> Because I enjoy writing music I guess. It's something I need to do. I haven't had a lot of time to do it now, but I've just started writing another piece … and just remembering how exciting it is. It's very exciting! It's like building a puzzle (Constantina Caldis).
>
> Jeez! Because I have to! Gerhard Marx said something interesting, and I can tell you that this resonated with me as to why I compose. He says you can't breathe in until you've breathed out. And composing is like breathing out all that stuff churning around inside (Clare Loveday).

Each composer seemed to feel some unconscious desire or need to create music: almost as if they had not chosen composition, but composition had chosen them. This desire to compose despite the odds needs to be coupled with a strong desire or drive to succeed, as very few composers, regardless of talent, skill or musical competence, are able to make it in this field. Success often comes down to composers' abilities to market themselves and seek out commissions within the hostile art music field. This obviously goes hand in hand with the ability to align oneself with certain aesthetic or political ideals and factions within the field. Or as Zaidel-Rudolph puts it: "there are certain composers who have learnt to manipulate the contemporary music scene in order to promote themselves and their music".

Along with the desire to create music, young composers have expressed a desire for a new identity as South Africans (as noted in Chapter 2). It is obviously quite a challenge to express something new in a field that seems on the one hand to be almost afraid of change, as some members of the older guard find it threatening and do their best to stifle anything new and interesting, and on the other hand seems full of opportunity. Annemari Ferreira discussed her feelings on the responses of some older composers to the works she had had performed with the WCPE: "In general [they] condone the atonal and stranger works. I don't even know if it's about liking or disliking – I think sometimes I get the feeling that they go out on that kind of vision and they can't condone anything else because that's not what they've allowed themselves to do".

In a testimonial that Christo Jankowitz wrote to accompany one of the WCPE's many funding applications, he commented that: "The choice of works to be performed is not restricted to any political or aesthetic bias". I believe that our ability to remove ourselves from a significant degree of "political or aesthetic bias" was an important achievement

for the group. Every work submitted to the WCPE was performed, despite disapproval voiced by the powers that be who had personal issues with certain composers. I chose to approach each new work with a level of openness and trust, not allowing my own personal feelings or previous unsuccessful performances to taint my view of a piece until it had been performed. I felt that each work, each composer, deserved an even playing field or platform for presentation.

Formulating the programmes for WCPE concerts was entirely my domain. I approached composers asking them to give me the parts for existing works or to write new works for our upcoming concerts. I chose the running order and designed and printed the programmes that were distributed at each event. There was usually absolutely no input from the Wits staff when it came to the programmes, so long as I only included students who were 'in favour' with the staff. For our lunch hour concert on the 24th of October 2007, I chose to include a string quartet by a composer who had completed their composition training in 2006, but was still working on the written component of their BMus degree. I was aware that this student had difficulties with their composition lecturer. This student had commented that they would love to continue their studies if they "could find a compatible teacher" (Mullins 2007: 93), but I did not think that this would have an impact on whether or not we were 'allowed' to perform this work. So I was rather taken aback when I was told that the piece by this composer was a "waste of time" and I should not programme it, but rather contact students who were still studying composition at Wits and ask them for works. I had already contacted all the composers on the WCPE mailing list asking for works, and had programmed all the submitted works. I found it disturbing that not only would personal feelings towards a former student jeopardise a performance opportunity, but also that I would be put in the position where I would have to remove a fellow student's composition from our programme for no good reason. My journal for this period contains the comment:

> I've chosen to go ahead with ***'s piece. I can't chase after other composers to full up the programme when I have someone who is so eager to be a part of this concert and who is actually willing to make the effort to get the music to me … What would I say to ***? Sorry, we can't play your piece because *** doesn't like you! (Journal Entry, 15 October 2007 – name has been removed to ensure confidentiality)

The ability to move away from the infighting of the art music field is essential to the formation of a new, genuine South African art music identity. Young composers need to make a clean break from the baggage the older generations of South African composers seem to be clinging to. They need to be free from pressures to conform to the ideals and aesthetics of the already established composers in order to start afresh and write music that is truly representative of where and when it is written,

This is easier said than done. Funding organisations are wary of allocating money to young composers. Without professional instrumentalists, performances may be substandard, and even student musicians are who are willing to play new music may not play without monetary compensation. Audiences are unlikely to attend concerts when they are not familiar with any of the composers on the programme.

I am not suggesting an exclusion of all older composers. There is certainly much to be learnt from experienced composers, and the involvement of teacher or mentor type figures was one of the 'lacks' identified in the data. Similarly, there are established composers who are supportive and generous with their knowledge, who are willing to share their experience. What I am suggesting is an awareness of all the negative factors at play within the art music field and a zero tolerance policy of any aesthetic pressure. If younger composers have something to bring to the table, whether it is in the form of an ensemble dedicated to playing their music, or just a large support system with similar objectives, they will be able to stand their ground and construct the identity of their choice.

I have defined the term 'young composer' in a specific way for the purposes of this research, taking the age of 32 as my 'cut off' for inclusion in this group. In reality, very few composers below the age of 32 or even below the age of 40 have had the experience, in both writing and having works performed, to have really earned the title 'composer'.

'Qualified' composers coming out of the academy are in no way ready to embark on composition careers when they leave university, yet they find themselves suddenly alone. Kate Trump spoke of the final moments of her composition education at Wits – the first (and last) presentation of her works in the Sound Us Out Concert in 2007:

> I didn't realize how much the practical side felt like going down a cliff! And I still don't think I have it … I was in such a terrible stressed place, 'cause you don't know what you're doing. You don't know what you're supposed to be doing. Then all of a sudden the rehearsals are upon you and you suddenly have to produce these amazing pieces, and you've never done this – but this is your final! You've never led up to it! Those last two months I just sweated solidly from fear! I didn't know how I was going to get it done.

The only way composers can gain the skills necessary to successfully present works in concert is through practical experience, but this type of experience is not offered in the academic setting of this study. By the time students have the chance to participate in a concert in which their pieces are being performed and are able to see just how much they still have to learn about becoming a working composer, their education is officially over and there is no opportunity for them to act on the desire for more knowledge and experience.

European and American composers are supported by a host of festivals and workshops that cater for developing composers, yet South Africans do not have these types of structures in place. There is of course the Annual New Music Indaba, but that is only one week of the year and the costs involved in attending American and European festivals are astronomical – one particular American contemporary music festival I enquired about would cost more for the three weeks of the festival than my entire Masters degree – excluding traveling costs.

The prospect of stepping away from the WCPE, away from an academic setting, is a rather daunting one. This time last year I was setting up the dates for six concerts, trying to decide which of my works to have performed when. Now I have an empty calendar with no performance prospects. I find myself following in the footsteps of the recently graduated composition students I surveyed – none of whom have had a single performance since the end of their degrees. There are now no structures in place outside of the university which allow young composers the opportunity to have their works performed – and I find that it is up to me to make my own opportunities, for as Jeanne Zaidel-Rudolph comments, "Those that wait for handouts will wait for a long time. Those that get on with it, write music and actively help to mobilize to get their works performed either inside or outside the academy may succeed". Similarly Chris Walton commented:

> I think this is to a large extent up to the composers themselves … Do young composers at university make the most of their chances? Do they spend all their free time listening to music with the score, going to concerts, talking to those who know more and learning all they can from them? If not, then all the structures in the world won't help them.

There does seem to be a general sense of apathy amongst many young composers. Most seem willing to dedicate large amounts of time to complaining about the lack of opportunities available to them, but very few seem to be willing to go out and make them. When I asked: "Have you actively sought out opportunities to have your works performed?" in my 2007 student survey, only 16% of the respondents said that they had. I often found this very frustrating. On occasion, I especially put specific ensembles together knowing that certain composers who were studying composition at Wits, but were not involved in the WCPE, had written for that instrumentation. On approaching these composers, I was told they were uninterested or too busy to participate.

> I can't believe that she would turn down a performance opportunity like this! All she has to do is print out the parts and give them to me – she could even just email them to me – I'll do the rest! (Journal Entry, 8 November 2008)

The idea of attending one rehearsal and a performance seemed too much for some, but there were several other students who were dedicated to making their composition careers work, and these composers made the most of the opportunities the WCPE offered. The WCPE experience allows young composers to leave university with more practical experience than their counterparts at other universities or students who chose not to participate in the WCPE, but there remains a large gap between the end of a composer's university education and the point at which a composition career can be seen to start.

In order for young composers to continue to mature, this gap needs to be filled by some sort of composers group that can assist these artists in their development and provide them with the practical experience necessary to succeed. The hostile contemporary art music environment does not provide such structures and it is up to the young composers themselves to form these groups. The WCPE offers a model for the type of structures that need to be established if young composers are going to remove themselves from the hostility of the current field, write music that they feel is genuine and untainted by the

politics of the field, and gain the skills and experience they need to become a working composer.

As discussed in the previous chapters, the WCPE aimed to provide exciting opportunities for young musicians to have their own compositions performed; workshop student composers' work-in-progress as an educational experience; open a vibrant interactive dialogue between composers and performers in order to learn the important lessons that can only be gained through practical interaction with instrumentalists experienced or inexperienced in performing new music; and establish a cohesive 'musical community' amongst young Johannesburg based composers. I will use Rice's notion of musical metaphor to assess the relative success of the WCPE's aims.

Rice explains that the use of musical metaphor can assist in the understanding of music within the subject-centered musical ethnography (2003: 159) and, as I have said, suggests four main music metaphors: "music-as-art", "music-as-social behaviour", "music-as-symbolic system or text capable of reference not only to already existing music but also a world beyond music" and "music-as-commodity" (Ibid 166-167). The music created by the WCPE can be viewed in terms of each of these metaphors, and the progress and shortcomings of the ensemble can be best understood when the music we created, as well as the inner workings and social dynamics of the group, is explored within these metaphors.

The WCPE and Music-as-Social-Behaviour

The "social behaviour" element of our music making was probably the most important and most successful area of growth in the WCPE. Composers started talking to one another, listening to one another's music, commenting on what they liked or thought needed improving: "I believe that I have learnt from others, and that others have learnt from me" commented Annemari Ferreira in a testimonial she wrote to accompany one of the WCPE's funding applications. She went on to explain that this "is an important aspect of any compositional society if there is going to be any growth as a compositional community" (2007). Composers also interacted with instrumentalists and, through this,

honed their instrumentation skills. Computer programs such as Sibelius and Finale allow composers to write music that is not bound by technical limitations, but working with real musicians generates other challenges that working composers need to learn to overcome. Annemari Ferreira commented that the WCPE gave her the

> opportunity to hear what the music sounds like on the instruments you've written it for. You know, Sibelius and Finale can't compare to what it actually sounds like. Also, working with the actual artists – sometimes that's the most difficult part, because sometimes you think: 'oh it's going to work out fine and its going to sound good', but getting people to play it and play it right is more complicated.

For Vusi Ndelebele, it was the notational issues that were exposed by live musicians that taught him a particularly valuable lesson:

> A few of the guys initially struggled with it. I was upset, but it turns out I didn't do the note groupings right. So okay, that was my fault. So I learnt not to just assume that Sibelius will sort it all out. I have to check my stuff. I also learnt how to work with people. They weren't very happy about that and a few other things, so I had to kind of come out and apologise and then go and fix it. I'd never actually attended rehearsals like that before, so it was quite interesting … It's also interesting to note that performers will also usually have advice for you as a composer: 'this would sound better like this'. So that was great.

When preparing compositions for performance, people skills become just as important as composition skills.

Another social element is found in the presentation of works in concert. The presentation of new works in concert was the main event in our micro performance culture. Most of our energy was expended on preparing for these concerts, as this was a rare opportunity to 'test-drive' what we had been working on and see how it fared. This 'presentation' came to be more than just the five or ten minutes it took to play through the piece. It was the whole process of constructing a piece of music that could speak to an audience; collaborating with the performers and sculpting the new work into shape; allowing an audience access to work through a concert performance so they could respond to the work; and finally judging the outcome of the work by looking at the responses from audience members, performers and fellow composers. 'Presentation', for us, became a highly social activity that involved a number of different people. Annemari Ferreira commented that the WCPE concerts gave young composers the opportunity to "see how

an audience responds to your work – which is important! There are obviously lots of people who go out on the principle that audience response is not important and it's about how you feel about the music, but for me personally, audience response is hugely important". Some audience members appreciated what the WCPE was trying to do with regard to educating young composers and were kind enough to email responses through to the WCPE email address after a concert. Other audience members, who were invited through the WCPE mailing list, simply showed their support and encouragement through regular attendance of our events. Either way, the young composers were able to get a sense of the success or failure of their works from people other than their colleagues in WCPE and performers, and also draw courage and inspiration from the fact that there were people interested in what they had to say.

The achievement of 'getting people to talk to one another' does not seem to be an important one, but it is something that has been sorely missing amongst young composers – and even older composers if you recall Walton's quote: "On the whole, I think they hate each other". This has had a huge affect on the way young composers write. By interacting with other composers, performers and audience members the young composers were able to sound their voices and then gauge the responses they received. Music has the ability to speak, and it is only through repeatedly 'trying out' or 'test-driving' a voice that young composers can develop a recognizable sound that has the ability to communicate with an audience successfully. Having a supportive network of peers who encouraged and advised one another also built confidence and motivated composers to challenge themselves, striving to better their work for each concert. This, coupled with regular opportunities to 'present' new works, is the only way that young composers can begin to form an identity of their own.

The WCPE and Music-as-Commodity

These few positive experiences with the WCPE offered a glimpse of what is possible when young composers work together to improve their situation. Yet very few of the young composers that were interviewed imagine a future for themselves in South Africa with composition as a marketable commodity:

> South African composers, they're not promoted, they're not commercialised – well not that contemporary [music] is commercialised anyway. But at least overseas – and I know 'cause some of my friends are studying over there – the concerts are always promoted to a huge extent even the, you know, 'common people' [gesturing inverted commas] hear about it. You don't have to be in a music circle to know about it because it's advertised. You know there are CDs brought out of this music constantly … it's not like: 'oh wow! There's one event in two months' time, and maybe ten people will show up to watch it – that's how it is in South Africa! (Annemari Ferreira).

This lack of promotion results in musicians and potential audience members being rather ignorant about the new music scene. There are new music concerts, but nobody seems to know about them. There is no denying that there is not much opportunity for young art music composers in South Africa, but the situation seems worse when the few opportunities that do exist are unknown.

Constantina Caldis, who has moved in the direction of commercial music, offered another point of view:

> I do [see a future for myself in South Africa], because of the line of work I've chosen though. There is a gap for commercial composers, be it writing jingles for commercials, then hopefully getting into film music, because the film industry and the whole arts industry in South Africa is growing. You just have to be willing to wait for it to grow. Overseas – I don't think it's any better unless you go to America or the UK. And when you go there – competition! – whereas here, I am already more qualified than a lot of people. So … you've got to think of it like that. The grass isn't always greener on the other side.

The distinction between "music-as-art" and "music-as-commodity" seemed to be an important one to the interviewees, with some composers turning their noses up at the idea of writing commercial music and others insisting that it is the only way to survive as a composer.

> There seems to be such a rift between the two, for some unknown reason. I don't understand it, because I am both if you ask me. I've come from the training of the one and I'm moving towards work in the other because that's where the work is. Whereas in academic writing – just waiting around for someone to give you a commission – it's not going to happen unless you're the top person (Constantina Caldis).

Composers who do not write commercial music are usually confined to writing in an academic setting. As Babbitt stated, "the university, which – significantly – has provided so many contemporary composers with their professional training and general education, should provide a home for the 'complex', 'difficult' and 'problematic' [in other words – non-commercial] music" (Babbitt 1998: 40). Writing in the academy comes with a number of problems, particularly in South Africa. Although Babbitt contends that the university should be the home for 'boundary-pushing' music, in South Africa a lot of music that comes out of the academy is rather conservative. Chris Walton commented that there is "an unwillingness to transform among the old guard" within the academy, going on to explain that "after 1994, there should have been a ruthless cull of older academic staff, primarily at the old Afrikaans universities. There wasn't, and the result is stultification". The limited number of positions within the academy seem to be taken, a problem that was identified in Chapter 2 where Kerryn Tracey commented that one's ability to create a space for oneself "depends on how much … [one] want[s] to fight to decrease the space of the other composers". The academy is, however, one of the few places that allows a composer the opportunity to make a living through writing music (although this is coupled with the tasks of teaching and administration).

The ability to turn music into revenue is difficult to acquire: "I am not at all sure how one goes about doing this" commented one young composer in my 2007 survey (Mullins 2007: 90). Another problem in writing commercial music is the loss of identity, and this seems to be most young composers' gripe with music-as-commodity. Caldis commented: "It's not like in the old days where you're a composer so you get to sit and write music all day. You have to find work now, so there's no time for that. You actually really only end up composing for jobs". When creating music that is designed to compliment a superior narrative, composers are bound by the visions of other artists, whether they are film directors, advertising firms or clients and the composer's creative voice or identity is stifled.

Of all the young composers I interviewed and surveyed, only Caldis had managed to make money from an original composition, receiving a small sum of money for a thirty second clip of music she wrote for an advertisement. Caldis was also the only one who had a definite career plan that involved making a living from composition. Others were

considering careers in education and academia with several expressing an interest in writing for film, although acknowledging that they do not have the technical sound engineering skills to do so (see page 38).

Although these young composers were not entirely sure *what* career path they would follow, they were mostly sure about *where* they would like to work:

> Overseas! And it's not because I want it to be overseas, it's because, unless there is a secret realm of which I am unaware, there really is not a space for it to happen over here – unless you are a Michael Blake or someone respected. And even him – he doesn't really get the audience he deserves … It's just that there isn't a space for classical music in South Africa, especially not contemporary creations (Annemari Ferreira).

The WCPE tried to create such a space. By providing performance opportunities to young composers, we removed the pressure to try and use music as a commodity and encouraged them to view their music as art, where there were no rules, boundaries or conditions for what could or could not be done. This alleviation of pressure allowed composers to explore different avenues with greater freedom and support, but the problem of 'earning' capital through composition remains a major problem. Bourdieu identifies four types of capital: "economic capital (money and property), cultural capital (cultural goods and services including educational credentials), social capital (acquaintances and networks), and symbolic capital (legitimation)" (in Pooley 2008: 5). The WCPE could not provide young composers with economic capital for their works, but the act of workshopping and performing works did create symbolic and cultural capital, thus commodifying these works.

The WCPE and Music-as-Art

The works presented in concert reflected the artistic courage composers gained over the course of our eighteen months of concerts. This artistic growth can be seen in the contrast between the eight works presented at our first two concerts on the 13th and 16th of May 2007 and the ten works presented at our final concert on the 25th of November 2008. The concert on the 25th of November 2008 was the last concert of 2008, the last concert in

which the current core members of the WCPE participated and, I imagine, the last WCPE concert ever, as there is not a suitable successor to take over the organisation and management of the group once I leave Wits. This concert was the culmination of everything we had learnt, both musically and logistically, and we received rave reviews from the audience members who attended the concert. The works presented in this final concert saw the young composers taking greater risks in their writing.

Annemari Ferreira has composed works for all but two of the WCPE's concerts and an interesting progression can be seen in her works. *The Jewel Thief*, which was presented at the second WCPE concert on the 16th of May 2007, was an atonal piano solo written in sonata form. Our fourth concert on the 24th of October 2007 saw Ferreira working with a larger ensemble – a piano quartet – and experimenting with "irony by contrasting non-tonal sections with sections that are almost saccharine, dripping with I-IV-V [chord progressions]" and abrupt meter changes. The "performer-audience relationship" was explored in Ferreira's string quartet, *Careful Colouring* that was presented on the 12th of March 2008. Ferreira explained:

> I have composed four musical themes to coincide with four colours. A series of posters with images on them will offer four multiple choice options regarding the audience's reaction to each image. These four options will each be represented by a colour, and hence, a musical theme. The audience will be handed colour panels before the concert so that they react to the multiple choice by lifting the appropriate panel for the performers to see. Whichever response the audience makes, the players must then coincide by playing the relevant musical theme/s. The compositional structure is therefore entirely dependent on the audience's response to the visual stimuli provided (although admittedly the chosen images will be chosen with care and purpose), even though the musical material is pre-composed. (WCPE Programme Notes, 12 March 2008).

Ferreira discussed her experience with this work in my interview with her, explaining why she found it difficult to write such conceptual works.

> *Careful Colouring*, I think was my lowest point. If I can't pick out a favourite I can certainly pick out a least favourite … You don't have a lot of feedback because you don't have a lot of workshops, because there's no interest. So you're kind of going onto a blank page. You don't know what the reaction is going to be. And even afterwards, you do get some kind of response, but it's not in depth so you don't really know what to think of your composition and if it was successful or not. You know, most of my other pieces were kind of commercial to a certain

> degree and that's why I got more audience feedback, but *Careful Colouring* was much more conceptual and I had nothing to go on. And as you know, that was a bit traumatic for me.

In the final concert, on the 25th of November, Ferreira presented two new works. The first, a clarinet quartet titled *The Return of Roger Rabbit* and the second, a piece titled *A Musical Portrait With Keys*, which made use of instruments that were related to keys. *The Return of Roger Rabbit* works with "cliché musical characteristics", and includes a "percussive section in which none of the four specialized musicians play their instruments", requiring the violinist to reach inside the piano and run a hairbrush across the strings while the clarinetist shouts nonsense words such as "gu-ku-ku ka". Keys, padlocks, a computer keyboard and a piano keyboard were used as the main instruments in *A Musical Portrait With Keys* and the 'percussionists' were given space to improvise in this quasi-aleatoric piece (WCPE Programme Notes, 25 November 2008).

This type of artistic progression is echoed in the works of the other WCPE composers. As we gained experience and confidence through successful performances we became less bound by rules and expectations and more comfortable with artistic experimentation.

The WCPE and Music-as-Symbolic-System

The final musical metaphor Rice suggests is "music-as-symbolic system or text capable of reference not only to already existing music but also a world beyond music" (2003: 167). This system of referencing can be the means by which composers construct their identity, especially when they are starting out. This can take the shape of incorporating African material or techniques into art music in order to establish South African nationality or more subtle references to the world 'outside' music. It is also related to the idea of 'saying something', locating oneself, having a voice. Kerryn Tracey comments:

> I do [feel a need to say something through my music], but then who are you saying it to? The average person will need a lot of programme notes to figure out exactly what it is that you're saying. I think that music does have the ability to speak … You can definitely say something. And you can definitely have something that is interpreted in a way that you don't mean it to say something … I'm also pretty careful with things like that.

The young composers discussed the references, both musical and non-musical, they made in the programme notes that accompanied each of the compositions presented in concert:

> This piece was written as an exploration of the world of polyrhythm (Matthew Klawansky, *At the Bad Hotel*, 16 May 2007).
>
> It was written at the end of my first year at varsity, in which an in depth study of Chorale Harmonization and of Bach's techniques of chromaticism were the central course focus. At the time I was also occupied with the Late-Romanticism of Brahms and especially of Mahler … The most obvious reference is the nostalgic feeling and falling melodic lines of Late–Romanticism - this still influences my musical thinking until the present day. The harmonic language is triadic, yet chromatic, and the texture is mostly chorale like. The overall form is ternary with a short introduction (Christo Jankowitz, *Lyric Piece*, 29 August 2007).
>
> I first encountered this poem by Ingrid Jonker when I was quite young. I can't remember a moment since then that I did not love it, so when my matric Afrikaans teacher jokingly said that it's a lyrical poem and that one of us should put music to it, I thought: 'Well, why not?". That night I sat down at my piano and started harmonizing the melody that had already rooted itself into my brain (Annemari Ferreira, *Bitter Bessie Dagbreek*, 29 August 2007).
>
> This short piece is based freely on the fairy tale by Oscar Wilde (Christo Jankowitz, *Ballad of the Nightingale and the Rose*, 12 March 2008).
>
> SAGA 631 explores the urban landscape of Johannesburg (Angie Mullins, *SAGA* 631, 6 August 2008).
>
> The concept for this work was taken from the title of Ivan Vladislavić's *Portrait with Keys* (Annemari Ferreira, *A Musical Portrait With Keys*, 25 November 2008).
>
> Arc is part of a collaborative project with artist Jill Trappler. It was written in response to Stella Rose, a large abstract painting based on sections of circles in strong browns and blacks with underlying hints of lilac (Clare Loveday, *Arc*, 25 November 2008).
>
> This piece was inspired by one of the most beautiful locations in South Africa – the Blyde River Canyon, which is situated against the Greater Drakensberg escarpment (Angie Mullins, *Blyde River Canyon*, 25 November 2008).

These references include musical ones – "the Late-Romanticism of Brahms" – as well as non-musical references ranging from art to literary works to landscapes. In each case the

composers aimed to represent an emotion or narrative through their music and are doing so, I suggest, to express something about their identity. For example, Annemari Ferreira, who has done simultaneous studies in music and English literature, makes reference to books and poetry in her music, such as Ivan Vladislavic's book *A Musical Portrait With Keys* and Ingrid Jonker's poem *Bitter Bessie Dagbreek*. Similarly, I come from a family of architects and town planners, and even considered following this career path myself. I am fascinated by shifting landscapes, both rural and urban, and a number of the pieces I have composed thus make reference to landscapes or geographical locations such as Blyde River Canyon (*Blyde River Canyon*), Johannesburg (*SAGA 631*) or The Kyoto Cemetery in Japan (*Things You Can Only See From Above*).

Taking the idea of music as a symbolic discourse further: when Michael Blake emphasises the importance of creating music that 'says something' – "I think it's just important for composers to find a way to speak. Find a language, however simple, and whether they write music that just expresses one idea, but says it honestly, with sincerity. I think that's the kind of music that works" – what he is really saying is that music needs to speak in a particular voice. Blake is quite critical of music currently being composed by young South African composers, because to him it lacks such a voice:

> I think the thing that worries me the most, I think there are a lot of composers who are writing what I call very old music. You know, music that sounds like it's been written about a hundred years ago, or more. And while such pieces may be very well constructed and very well crafted, I don't know, I can't find anything in them that says anything to me except the voice of the composer saying I long for the past, you know, like nostalgia. And I think that nostalgia might relate to our post-apartheid condition and that's one way of going about it. So for me those are not great pieces, and I'm also not interested in pieces that are very overtly sounding like Africa.

As discussed in the previous chapters, sounding 'overtly South African' is something that is encouraged or even insisted upon by commission bodies such as SAMRO (see page 8), but WCPE composers deliberately chose not to be 'African' (see Chapter 1):

> Look, if that's what you feel you need to do, then that's what you do. I couldn't possibly do that! I just can't! I just can't! I've never encountered the need for African identity in my music … I don't know. Maybe it works against me. I don't care! I just can't! I can't! (Clare Loveday).

> I find that very very traumatizing because of my background. I was brought up very liberal … but we had no identity of our own. I had to search for that. I had to make my own identity and I very quickly found, because I lived a lot of years outside South Africa, I found that I could never be a part of the black culture because I'm not! I didn't grow up in it! It's not in my bones! (Kate Trump).

The idea of nostalgia or the writing of 'old' music that Blake also identified as problematic can be seen in a number of pieces that the WCPE performed. I was able to identify three reasons why composers chose to write in this way: education, the fear of the unknown, and resistance to aesthetic pressure. 'Old' music is what we were taught – Bach, Mozart, Brahms, Beethoven, Wagner, Cage – certainly nothing current. The South African music we were exposed to was indeed 'very African' and not something we could identify with or hear ourselves in. Most young composers were trained in the Western Classical idiom and thus found that they identified more with older Classical styles instead of the insincere and contrived 'overtly African' music they were exposed to during their education. The lack of exposure to current music trends coupled with the fact that South Africa is so removed from the centres of innovation and progress – Europe and North America – results in young composers feeling uncertain about writing 'new music'.

As I outlined at the beginning of Chapter 2, the questions and politics of identity in post-apartheid South Africa are very loaded and can become overwhelming for a young composer. The feeling I got when speaking to young composers, both formally in my interviews and informally in WCPE rehearsals or workshops, was that the choice (though I do not think it was always a conscious choice) to write 'old' music came from fear or uncertainty about their own identity. The pressure to conform to certain ideas or sounds led some composers to try to entirely remove themselves from the debate of South African identity – almost a deliberate attempt to be 'un-African' – carried out by making use of a style that does not demand a consciousness of time and place. In Chapter 1 I identified two types of South African composition which can be viewed as the two extreme points of the continuum in which composers operate. The use of 'old' music or nostalgia situates the composer on the outside edge of type 2, which I defined as a type of composition where a conscious decision not to be blatantly South African is taken, although a South African sound is still perceived due to the circumstances under which the composer writes. The use of 'old' music allows the composer to almost eradicate any

trace of 'South Africanness' by situating themselves in a traditional Western Classical frame that is in no way African.

By using Rice's notion of the three dimensional musical experience, an understanding of the space in which young South African composers live and work can be formulated. South Africa is, despite fourteen years of democracy, still going through a metamorphic period that presents many challenges to the ideas of identity construction, particularly with regard to art music. The South African art music field is a harsh and difficult place in which to work and young composers are constantly met with pressure to communicate through their music, align themselves with certain political or aesthetic views, and make some sort of living out of their craft, all while trying to maintain a level of artistic integrity.

Conclusion

I used this ethnographic micro study to not only describe and theorise the WCPE, but also to critique the ensemble, our aims and intentions, the way in which we carried out these aims, and the significance of such a group for young composers in South Africa. Rice's model of the subject-centered musical ethnography allowed me to develop an understanding of the musical experience of young South African composers by examining the interactions of just a few self-reflexive individuals, working within the constraints of this time and place.

I started the WCPE and, even though I tried to encourage other composers to become involved in administrative tasks and decision making, I was ultimately solely responsible for running the ensemble. I did, on many occasions, ask the composers and performers for their input when making creative decisions and asked for help with simple tasks such as programme design, advertising, venue decorating and catering. Despite my consultative endeavours, I retained the primary role in managing the ensemble and was seen to be controlling all aspects of the WCPE. This was not my intention. I would have greatly appreciated creative guidance or reassurance from my peers, or even just practical help with the 'heavy lifting' that was involved in concert organisation. Ultimately, I did

make every decision regarding the WCPE, and the fact that this was done out of necessity rather than by choice does not change the fact that I was responsible for the WCPE's successes and failures.

The WCPE had a large impact on the composers who were involved in the group, but was by no means a perfect establishment. There were problems with the structure of the group, the way in which we carried out our aims, the sacrifices we had to make in order to get performances, and the way in which we marketed ourselves. For this reason I now need to critique the present ethnography so that something can be learnt from my experience with the WCPE and possibly applied to other, similar groups. The mistakes, failures and misjudgments I outline below, hindered the success of the WCPE, but they have also provided a wonderful learning opportunity for me and the other young composers and performers who were involved.

In order to get as much experience and exposure as possible, I chose to schedule a Lunch Hour concert in each of the four teaching blocks. There was also a Sound Us Out Concerts in each semester, plus two additional events – the Wits Art and Literature Experience and the Wits Student Architecture Film Festival. This resulted in composers writing for concerts in March, April, May, twice in July, August and twice in November. The students involved in the ensemble were all studying and had large university workloads. Due to the frequency of concerts, composers were not given much time to prepare works and often wrote pieces in two or three weeks before the concert in order to fill our programmes. This resulted in composers not having the time to write their best possible works or adequately edit and prepare parts. This, in turn, frustrated the student performers and made them less willing to work with the WCPE. The result of this was the presentation of substandard performances, resulting in poor audience response. In hindsight, it was probably not a good idea to place so much pressure on the composers of the group – I feel that, if I were to schedule another year of concerts, I would go for quality rather than quantity.

All but one of the WCPE's concerts took place at Wits University, with the majority of the Wits concerts taking place in The Atrium in the South West Engineering Building. Although I did contact a number of modern art galleries regarding a performance to

coincide with one of their exhibitions, we seemed to get stuck in one place and all the concerts seemed to blur into one. There was no degree of separation between our events and, despite my continuous involvement and organisation of the WCPE, I would be hard put to tell you which work was performed when. More variety would have served the WCPE well and made each event more memorable and unique.

The one venue that was not The Atrium, and does stand out in my memory although not for good reasons, was the Wits Library Lawns. The Wits Art and Literature Experience, a festival produced by the Wits Faculty of Humanities, had received generous sponsorship and offered remuneration to festival participants. In our proposal we requested either the Wits Theatre, the Nunnery (another small theatre on Wits' East Campus) or the Atrium as our venue. The Wits Performing Arts Administration, however, felt that in order to justify the budget we had requested to pay the twenty instrumentalists who were involved in the 80 minute programme, we needed to hold the concert in a more central location where more people would be able to hear us. Despite my better judgment, I agreed to this venue as it was the only way we would have been able to hire the musicians we needed, and probably the only opportunity the composers would have to present works for a large ensemble.

The Wits Library Lawns was an unsuitable venue for a contemporary art music concert. The small audience was scattered over a large area, the sound did not carry well, sheet music blew and flapped in the wind despite being pegged to the music stands, and the audience chatted and laughed as they picnicked in the sun. Our carefully crafted music 'saying something' was reduced to background noise. I conducted one of my own compositions at this event and, afterwards, commented in my diary: "What a disaster! The wind was so strong I could barely hang onto my score, let alone conduct! At least no one was really paying attention" (Journal Entry, 6 April 2008). Although this was a wonderful social event, it did not work as an artistic event. We made artistic sacrifices in order to accommodate a marketing strategy. It is an example of the way we gave ourselves opportunities at the expense of quality, and artistic integrity.

Another factor that hampered the WCPE's progress was the ensemble's rather dull and uninviting image. I was never particularly keen on 'The Wits Contemporary Performance

Ensemble' as a name and 'The WCPE' was also a bit of a mouthful. The project we were working on was an exciting one to us, but I often wondered if the ensemble was not viewed as a serious, cerebral, and boring group by the general student body. I often felt that the student performers viewed their WCPE participation as 'charity work' and were not excited or enthusiastic about the prospect of performing with us. Maybe with a funky name and a more exciting image the WCPE could have garnered more enthusiasm from the musicians we called on to perform our works and the potential audience members who considered attending our concert (but did not).

For a long time, composition was something I could do, not something I wanted to do. I was majoring in composition at university and doing well at it, but I was not excited by it. During the course of the final year of my BMus degree I conducted the research which has contributed to this study, interviewing a number of interesting composers. It was in this way that I started becoming aware of what it meant to be a composer, but more significantly a South African composer. As part of this research I interviewed Michael Blake, and he said something that resonated with me:

> I think a lot of composers have actually lost – it's a bit desperate to say people have lost their way – but they've almost lost the idea of what they're supposed to be doing. I think if you ask most composers, 'why do you compose', they don't really have that much to say. But I think as a composer you have a lot of clout. You have a lot of political and social clout. Apart from being an artist, you can actually affect things – seriously. You can make people think differently, behave differently through your music.

South Africa is at such an interesting point in its history and there is so much that could be addressed or challenged through the music of this time, if only the composers who were responsible for writing this music were not so caught up in political and aesthetic 'correctness'. For me, the ability to speak to an audience, saying something about the remarkably unique, yet deeply troubled country in which I live is such an exciting and captivating idea. I believe it is this excitement that has driven me to develop a group like the WCPE that can perform South African works with the hope of communicating with an audience.

I must now return to the question I set out to answer at the beginning of this report: What are young composers saying about the time and place in which they live? I am not convinced that we know. And how can we be expected to know when we are so rarely given the chance to speak out loud? We know what we do not want to say. We know that we may not have a choice in what we say if we want to receive commissions or performances. But when it comes to constructing an identity, the young composers who make up the WCPE are at the very beginning of the process of discovery.

The task of setting up, running and ultimately laying the WCPE to rest was not an easy one, but I am convinced that it was an entirely worthwhile project. Through this ensemble, young composers had the opportunity to test their voices, to see if anyone is interested in what they have to say, to see if they are capable of saying anything at all. For this reason I believe it is important to reframe my research question as 'What did the experience of the WCPE say about the time and place in which it happened?' A great deal of the data that was presented in this report seemed to have a distinctly negative tone: lacks, infighting, politics, pressure. The answer to this new research question, however, offers a much more positive outlook on the future of composition in South Africa. The experience of the WCPE has shown that young composers are working in a difficult and troubled time and place, but they are working towards something interesting, exciting, unique and sincere. The road to this goal is not an easy one, as we have discovered over the past two years, but we are willing to go the distance, fight for what we believe in and push ourselves and one another to find a voice that can represent an honest, genuine picture of who we are.

All of the negative factors at play within the contemporary South African art music field seem to have steered composers off course or, as Blake argues, caused them to lose their way. The distractions of infighting and political correctness have detracted from the art of making music and all the possibilities inherent in this project. The young composers who make up the WCPE are stepping away from this group with more practical experience and logistical know-how than composers coming out of other institutions, as well as other Wits composers who have not taken part in the WCPE. They may not have all the answers, or even a clear picture of where they are heading, but they now know what needs to be done. I believe that if these composers can sustain a WCPE-type group

outside the university, where they can continue to learn through practical experience, explore their identity and form a unique and interesting voice with which to speak, while avoiding the politics of the contemporary art music field, they will be able to create music that speaks to South African citizens in a true and sincere voice.

Appendix 1: Wits Contemporary Performance Ensemble: Concerts, Composers and Works 2007-2008

13 May 2007 – Old n' New Antique Shop Concert

Annemari Ferreira	Dance of the Polar Bears
Ryan Kaplan	Banana Pie Monday
Matthew Klawansky	At the Bad Hotel
Matthew Klawansky	Elements of a Canon

16 May 2007 – 2nd Block Lunch Hour Concert

Matthew Klawansky	At the Bad Hotel
Angie Mullins	Anything But Over
Annemari Ferreira	Dance of the Polar Bears
Angie Mullins	Mending Bridges
Annemari Ferreira	The Jewel Thief
Angie Mullins	Timing is Everything

29 August 2007 – 3rd Block Lunch Hour Concert

Marcel Taljaard	Comic Book World Full of Heroes
Annemari Ferreira	Vocal Ensemble
Angie Mullins	Slide for String Quartet and Clock
Christo Jankowitz	Lyric Piece
Annemari Ferreira	Minuet and Trio
Angie Mullins	Homeward Old Rastignac
Annemari Ferreira	Bitter Bessie Dagbreek

24 October 2007 – 4th Block Lunch Hour Concert

Annemari Ferreira	Gods Are Born in the Stomach of Giant Praying Mantis
Matthew Klawansky	After the Rain, the Mushrooms
Kate Trump	Winging on a Spiral
Christo Jankowitz	Heretical Gambits
Angie Mullins	Accident in Slow Motion

12 March 2008 – 1st Block Lunch Hour Concert

Annemari Ferreira	Careful Coloring
Angie Mullins	Aspects
Christo Jankowitz	Ballad of the Nightingale and the Rose
Mokale Koapeng	Fourever Colourful

6 April 2008 – Wits Art and Literature Experience

Mokale Koapeng	Komeng
Christo Jankowitz	Heretical Gambits
Annemari Ferreira	Minuet and Trio
Christo Jankowitz	Lyric Piece
Christo Jankowitz	Ballad of the Nightingale and the Rose
Mokale Koapeng	Fourever Colourful
Angie Mullins	Aspects
Angie Mullins	Accident in Slow Motion
Mokale Koapeng	Black n' White

Angie Mullins	Saga 631 (Video footage by Eduardo Cachucho)

7 May 2008 – 2nd Block Lunch Hour Concert

Mokale Koapeng	Black n' White
Angie Mullins	Aspects
Angie Mullins	Ella Greary
Christo Jankowitz	Lullaby for the Damned

16 July 2008 – Wits Student Architecture Film Festival

Angie Mullins	Saga 631 (Video footage by Eduardo Cachucho)

6 August 2008 – 3rd Block Lunch Hour Concert

Angie Mullins	Saga 631 (Video footage by Eduardo Cachucho)
Angie Mullins	Vuranndani
Tim Harbour	Between Dreams

25 November – WCPE Concert

Clare Loveday	Charlie
Kate Trump	Dusk
Annemari Ferreira	A Musical Portrait with Keys
Christo Jankowitz	Behind the Darkest Veil
Mokale Koapeng	Fourever Colourful
Clare Loveday	Arc
Annemari Ferreira	The Return of Roger Rabbit
Angie Mullins	Pot-Kettle-Black
Christo Jankowitz	Arno: Neither Bewigged, Frilly nor Bearded
Angie Mullins	Blyde River Canyon

Appendix 2

Wits Contemporary Performance Ensemble: Composers 2007-2008

Annemari Ferreira
Dance of the Polar Bears
The Jewel Thief
Vocal Ensemble
Minuet and Trio
Bitter Bessie Dagbreek
Gods Are Born in the Stomach of a Giant Praying Mantis
Careful Coloring
A Musical Portrait With Keys
The Return of Roger Rabbit

Tim Harbour
Between Dreams

Christo Jankowitz
Ballad of the Nightingale and the Rose
Heretical Gambits
Lyric Piece
Ballad of the Nightingale and the Rose
Lullaby for the Damned
Behind the Darkest Veil
Arno: Neither Bewigged, Frilly nor Bearded

Ryan Kaplan
Banana Pie Monday

Matthew Klawansky
At the Bad Hotel
Elements of a Canon
After the Rain, the Mushrooms

Mokale Koapeng
Fourever Colourful
Komeng
Black n' White

Clare Loveday
Charlie
Arc

Angie Mullins
Anything But Over
Mending Bridges
Timing is Everything

Slide for String Quartet and Clock
Homeward Old Rastignac
Accident in Slow Motion
Saga 631
Aspects
Ella Greary
Vuranndani
Pot-Kettle-Black
Blyde River Canyon

Marcel Taljaard
Comic Book World Full of Heroes

Kate Trump
Winging on a Spiral
Dusk

Appendix 3

Wits Contemporary Performance Ensemble: Performers 2007-2008

Ilke Alexander – Flute		
SAGA 631	Angie Mullins	6 April 2008
SAGA 631	Angie Mullins	16 July 2008
SAGA 631	Angie Mullins	6 August 2008
Camron Andrews – Alto Saxophone		
SAGA 631	Angie Mullins	6 April 2008
Jan de Lange – Harpsichord		
SAGA 631	Angie Mullins	6 April 2008
Amy Fan – Violin		
Mending Bridges – 1st Movement	Angie Mullins	16 May 2007
Timing is Everything	Angie Mullins	16 May 2007
Slide for String Quartet & Clock	Angie Mullins	29 August 2007
Lyric Piece	Christo Jankowitz	29 August 2007
Minuet and Trio	Annemari Ferreira	29 August 2007
Annemari Ferreira – Voice		
At the Bad Hotel	Matthew Klawansky	16 May 2007
Timing is Everything	Angie Mullins	16 May 2007
Vocal Ensemble	Annemari Ferreira	29 August 2007
Annemari Ferreira – Piano		
The Jewel Thief	Annemari Ferreira	16 May 2007
Bitter Bessie Dagbreek	Annemari Ferreira	29 August 2007
Gods Are Born in the Stomach of a Giant Praying Mantis	Annemari Ferreira	24 October 2007
Tim Harbour – Guitar		
Between Dreams	Tim Harbour	6 August 2008
Chris Harrison – Voice		
Vocal Ensemble	Annemari Ferreira	29 August 2007
Chris Harrison – Percussion		
SAGA 631	Angie Mullins	6 April 2008
Carel Henn – Cello		
Lullaby for the Damned	Christo Jankowitz	7 May 2008
Bheki Hlatshwayo – Trumpet		
SAGA 631	Angie Mullins	6 April 2008
Lullaby for the Damned	Christo Jankowitz	7 May 2008

Christo Jankowitz – Violin

After The Rain, The Mushrooms	Matthew Klawansky	24 October 2007
Winging on a Spiral	Kate Trump	24 October 2007
Heretical Gambits	Christo Jankowitz	24 October 2007
Accident in Slow Motion	Angie Mullins	24 October 2007
Careful Coloring	Annemari Ferreira	12 March 2008
Komeng	Mokale Koapeng	6 April 2008
Heretical Gambits	Christo Jankowitz	6 April 2008
Minuet and Trio	Annemari Ferreira	6 April 2008
Lyric Piece	Christo Jankowitz	6 April 2008
Accident in Slow Motion	Angie Mullins	6 April 2008
SAGA 631	Angie Mullins	6 April 2008
Lullaby for the Damned	Christo Jankowitz	7 May 2008

Christo Jankowitz – Piano

Aspects	Angie Mullins	12 March 2008
Ballad of the Nightingale	Christo Jankowitz	12 March 2008
Fourever Colourful	Mokale Koapeng	12 March 2008
Ballad of the Nightingale	Christo Jankowitz	6 April 2008
Fourever Colourful	Mokale Koapeng	6 April 2008
Black and White	Mokale Koapeng	6 April 2008
Aspects	Angie Mullins	6 April 2008
Black n' White	Mokale Koapeng	7 May 2008
Aspects	Angie Mullins	7 May 2008
Ella Greary	Angie Mullins	7 May 2008
Vuranndani	Angie Mullins	6 August 2008
Behind the Darkest Veil	Christo Jankowitz	25 November 2008
Fourever Colourful	Mokale Koapeng	25 November 2008
The Return of Roger Rabbit	Annemari Ferreira	25 November 2008
Pot-Kettle-Black	Angie Mullins	25 November 2008
Arno: Neither Bewigged, Frilly, Nor Bearded	Christo Jankowitz	25 November 2008

Mike Kaplan – Voice

At the Bad Hotel	Matthew Klawansky	16 May 2007

Mike Kaplan – Guitar

Homeward Old Rastignac	Angie Mullins	29 August 2007

Lungile Khoza – Bassoon

SAGA 631	Angie Mullins	6 April 2008
SAGA 631	Angie Mullins	16 July 2008
SAGA 631	Angie Mullins	6 August 2008

Matthew Klawansky – Electric Guitar

Timing is Everything	Angie Mullins	16 May 2007

Matthew Klawansky – Voice

At the Bad Hotel	Matthew Klawansky	16 May 2007

Chris Lesapo – Djembe

Between Dreams	Tim Harbour	6 August 2008

Matthew Lombard – Saxophone

Arc	Clare Loveday	25 November 2008

Liroy Lourenco – Triangle

Timing is Everything	Angie Mullins	16 May 2007

Ignatia Madalane – Voice

At the Bad Hotel	Matthew Klawansky	16 May 2007
Timing is Everything	Angie Mullins	16 May 2007
Vocal Ensemble	Annemari Ferreira	29 August 2007
Lullaby for the Damned	Christo Jankowitz	7 May 2008

Samantha Mansfield – Clarinet

SAGA 631	Angie Mullins	6 April 2008
SAGA 631	Angie Mullins	16 July 2008

Louis Maritz – Piano

Timing is Everything	Angie Mullins	16 May 2007

Karin Meyer – Piano

Dance of the Polar Bear	Annemari Ferreira	16 May 2007
Timing is Everything	Angie Mullins	16 May 2007

Jaco Meyer – Cello

Charlie	Clare Loveday	25 November 2008
Dusk	Kate Trump	25 November 2008
Behind the Darkest Veil	Christo Jankowitz	25 November 2008
Fourever Colourful	Mokale Koapeng	25 November 2008
The Return of Roger Rabbit	Annemari Ferreira	25 November 2008
Pot-Kettle-Black	Angie Mullins	25 November 2008
Arno: Neither Bewigged, Frilly, Nor Bearded	Christo Jankowitz	25 November 2008

Thami Mhlanga – Voice

Vocal Ensemble	Annemari Ferreira	29 August 2007

Pule Mile – Voice

Vocal Ensemble	Annemari Ferreira	29 August 2007

Kate Moore – Viola

Komeng	Mokale Koapeng	6 April 2008
Heretical Gambits	Christo Jankowitz	6 April 2008
Minuet and Trio	Annemari Ferreira	6 April 2008
Lyric Piece	Christo Jankowitz	6 April 2008

Accident in Slow Motion	Angie Mullins	6 April 2008
SAGA 631	Angie Mullins	6 April 2008

Grant Mowatt – Percussion

SAGA 631	Angie Mullins	6 April 2008
SAGA 631	Angie Mullins	16 July 2008
SAGA 631	Angie Mullins	6 August 2008

Angie Mullins – Flute

Anything But Over	Angie Mullins	16 May 2007
Mending Bridges – 1st Movement	Angie Mullins	16 May 2007
Homeward Old Rastignac	Angie Mullins	29 August 2007
Ballad of the Nightingale and the Rose	Christo Jankowitz	12 March 2008
Ballad of the Nightingale and the Rose	Christo Jankowitz	6 April 2008

Angie Mullins – Voice

At the Bad Hotel	Matthew Klawansky	16 May 2007

Angie Mullins – Vibraphone

Ella Greary	Angie Mullins	7 May 2008

Amanda Mullins – Percussion

Ella Greary	Angie Mullins	7 May 2008

Amanda Mullins – Piano

SAGA 631	Angie Mullins	16 July 2008
SAGA 631	Angie Mullins	6 August 2008

Amanda Mullins – Electric Bass

Timing is Everything	Angie Mullins	16 May 2007

Vusi Ndebele – Voice

At the Bad Hotel	Matthew Klawansky	16 May 2007

Vusi Ndebele – Percussion

Ella Greary	Angie Mullins	7 May 2008

Jean Louise Nel – Viola

Slide for String Quartet & Clock	Angie Mullins	29 August 2007
Lyric Piece	Christo Jankowitz	29 August 2007
Minuet and Trio	Annemari Ferreira	29 August 2007
Gods Are Born in the Stomach of a Giant Praying Mantis	Annemari Ferreira	24 October 2007
After The Rain, The Mushrooms	Matthew Klawansky	24 October 2007
Winging on a Spiral	Kate Trump	24 October 2007
Heretical Gambits	Christo Jankowitz	24 October 2007
Accident in Slow Motion	Angie Mullins	24 October 2007

Careful Coloring	Annemari Ferreira	12 March 2008
Lullaby for the Damned	Christo Jankowitz	7 May 2008
SAGA 631	Angie Mullins	16 July 2008
SAGA 631	Angie Mullins	6 August 2008

Derek Saunders – Voice

Timing is Everything	Angie Mullins	16 May 2007

Matthew Short – Voice

Timing is Everything	Angie Mullins	16 May 2007

Chaya Laya Singer – Voice

At the Bad Hotel	Matthew Klawansky	16 May 2007
Timing is Everything	Angie Mullins	16 May 2007
Vocal Ensemble	Annemari Ferreira	29 August 2007

Margot Smythe – Cello

Mending Bridges – 1st Movement	Angie Mullins	16 May 2007
Timing is Everything	Angie Mullins	16 May 2007
Slide for String Quartet & Clock	Angie Mullins	29 August 2007
Lyric Piece	Christo Jankowitz	29 August 2007
Minuet and Trio	Annemari Ferreira	29 August 2007
Bitter Bessie Dagbreek	Annemari Ferreira	29 August 2007
Gods Are Born in the Stomach of a Giant Praying Mantis	Annemari Ferreira	24 October 2007
After The Rain, The Mushrooms	Matthew Klawansky	24 October 2007
Winging on a Spiral	Kate Trump	24 October 2007
Heretical Gambits	Christo Jankowitz	24 October 2007
Accident in Slow Motion	Angie Mullins	24 October 2007
Careful Coloring	Annemari Ferreira	12 March 2008
Ballad of the Nightingale and the Rose	Christo Jankowitz	12 March 2008
Fourever Colourful	Mokale Koapeng	12 March 2008
Komeng	Mokale Koapeng	6 April 2008
Heretical Gambits	Christo Jankowitz	6 April 2008
Minuet and Trio	Annemari Ferreira	6 April 2008
Lyric Piece	Christo Jankowitz	6 April 2008
Accident in Slow Motion	Angie Mullins	6 April 2008
Ballad of the Nightingale	Christo Jankowitz	6 April 2008
Fourever Colourful	Mokale Koapeng	6 April 2008
SAGA 631	Angie Mullins	6 April 2008

Yogin Sullaphen – Guitar

SAGA 631	Angie Mullins	6 April 2008

Inette Swart – Piano

Blyde River Canyon	Angie Mullins	25 November 2008

Marcel Taljaard – Piano

ComicBookWorldFullOfHeroes	Marcel Taljaard	29 August 2007

Mary Tennant – Violin

Dance of the Polar Bear	Annemari Ferreira	16 May 2007
Slide for String Quartet & Clock	Angie Mullins	29 August 2007
Lyric Piece	Christo Jankowitz	29 August 2007
Minuet and Trio	Annemari Ferreira	29 August 2007
Gods Are Born in the Stomach of a Giant Praying Mantis	Annemari Ferreira	24 October 2007
After The Rain, The Mushrooms	Matthew Klawansky	24 October 2007
Winging on a Spiral	Kate Trump	24 October 2007
Heretical Gambits	Christo Jankowitz	24 October 2007
Accident in Slow Motion	Angie Mullins	24 October 2007
Careful Coloring	Annemari Ferreira	12 March 2008
Fourever Colourful	Mokale Koapeng	12 March 2008
Komeng	Mokale Koapeng	6 April 2008
Heretical Gambits	Christo Jankowitz	6 April 2008
Minuet and Trio	Annemari Ferreira	6 April 2008
Lyric Piece	Christo Jankowitz	6 April 2008
Accident in Slow Motion	Angie Mullins	6 April 2008
Fourever Colourful	Mokale Koapeng	6 April 2008
SAGA 631	Angie Mullins	6 April 2008
Lullaby for the Damned	Christo Jankowitz	7 May 2008
SAGA 631	Angie Mullins	16 July 2008
Between Dreams	Tim Harbour	6 August 2008
SAGA 631	Angie Mullins	6 August 2008
Charlie	Clare Loveday	25 November 2008
Dusk	Kate Trump	25 November 2008
Fourever Colourful	Mokale Koapeng	25 November 2008
The Return of Roger Rabbit	Annemari Ferreira	25 November 2008
Pot-Kettle-Black	Angie Mullins	25 November 2008
Arno: Neither Bewigged, Frilly, Nor Bearded	Christo Jankowitz	25 November 2008

John Twyford – Voice

Timing is Everything	Angie Mullins	16 May 2007

Nicholas Williams – Bass Guitar

SAGA 631	Angie Mullins	6 April 2008
SAGA 631	Angie Mullins	16 July 2008
SAGA 631	Angie Mullins	6 August 2008

Kazleigh Wills – Voice

Timing is Everything	Angie Mullins	16 May 2007
Vocal Ensemble	Annemari Ferreira	29 August 2007
Bitter Bessie Dagbreek	Annemari Ferreira	29 August 2007

Ingrid Zlobinsky-Roux – Clarinet

Charlie	Clare Loveday	25 November 2008

Dusk	Kate Trump	25 November 2008
Behind the Darkest Veil	Christo Jankowitz	25 November 2008
The Return of Roger Rabbit	Annemari Ferreira	25 November 2008
Pot-Kettle-Black	Angie Mullins	25 November 2008
Arno: Neither Bewigged, Frilly, Nor Bearded	Christo Jankowitz	25 November 2008

Appendix 4

Interview Questions: Young Generation of Composers (Born After 1976)

The Expression of Individual and National Identity Through Music:

- What does your music say about you?
- What does your music say about your nationality or heritage?
- Do you feel a need or a duty to consciously say something through your music?
- Do you belong to any 'composer groups'? Who? Do the members of your group share your views/aesthetics?

Young Composers' Frames of Reference:

- What is your musical background?
- Where do you come from "musically"?
- What are your musical influences?
- What do you listen to?
- Do you listen to any contemporary South African art music? If yes – who and how do you get hold of recordings?

Compositional Method or Thought Process:

- Why do you compose?
- Who do you compose for?
- How do you compose?
- Have you ever used 'African elements' in a composition? Why? Why not?

The Experience of Composing in South Africa

- Do you feel that you would be able to compete with composers who have studied at international institutions?
- Do you see a future for yourself in South Africa?
- What career path do you see yourself following? Where?
- Are you aware of any politics surrounding the writing of art music in South Africa?

Live Performance Experience With the WCPE:

- Tell me about your live performance experiences…
- Do you find that South African musicians are willing to play new music?
- Which have been your favorite and least favorite performances, and why?
- How did you experience the rehearsal process leading up to the concert?
- Do you feel there were enough rehearsals? Was enough time provided for your work to be adequately prepared?
- Do you feel that you learnt something though the process of having your work performed and if so, what did you learn?
- How do you think your work was received by the audience? Were you happy with this reception?

Appendix 5

Interview Questions: Composers Between the Ages of 32 and 50

The Expression of Individual and National Identity Through Music (for comparison):

- What does your music say about you?
- What does your music say about your nationality or heritage?
- Do you feel a need or a duty to consciously say something through your music?
- Do you belong to any 'composer groups'? Who? Do the members of your group share your views/aesthetics?

Slightly Older Generation of Composers' Frames of Reference (for comparison):

- What is your musical background?
- Where do you come from "musically"?
- What are your musical influences?
- What do you listen to?
- Do you listen to any contemporary South African art music? If yes – who and how do you get hold of recordings?

Compositional Method or Thought Process (for comparison):

- Why do you compose?
- Who do you compose for?
- How do you compose?
- Have you ever used 'African elements' in a composition? Why? Why not?

Reception of Younger Generation of Composers:

- What are your thoughts on the young composers emerging out of South Africa?
- Have there been any young composers who have caught your attention? Why?

Live Performance Experience With the WCPE:

- Tell me about your live performance experiences…
- Do you find that South African musicians are willing to play new music?
- Which have been your favorite and least favorite performances, and why?
- How did you experience the rehearsal process leading up to the concert?
- Do you feel there were enough rehearsals? Was enough time provided for your work to be adequately prepared?
- Do you feel that you learnt something though the process of having your work performed and if so, what did you learn?
- How do you think your work was received by the audience? Were you happy with this reception?
- What were your thoughts on the other works performed by the WCPE this year?

Appendix 6

Interview Questions: Composers 50 and Older

The Expression of Individual and National Identity Through Music (for comparison):

- What does your music say about you?
- What does your music say about your nationality or heritage?
- Do you feel a need or a duty to consciously say something through your music?
- Do you belong to any 'composer groups'? Who? Do the members of your group share your views/aesthetics?

Reception of Younger Generation of Composers:

- What are your thoughts on the young composers emerging out of South Africa?
- Have there been any young composers who have caught your attention? Why?
- The contemporary South African art music scene is a highly contested space – how do you feel young composers are dealing with the challenges and difficulties this field presents?
- How do you feel your experience of 'starting out' as a composer differed from the experiences of young composers who are starting their careers now?

The Wits Contemporary Performance Ensemble:

- What effect do you feel the emergence of the WCPE has had on composition at Wits?
- What were your thoughts on the works presented in concert by the WCPE?

Appendix 7

Questionnaire: WCPE Performers

Performers' perceptions about new South African music

- Why do you perform with the WCPE?
- Which have been your favorite and least favorite performances, and why?
- How do you think the audiences received the new works?
- Do you feel that you learnt something though the process of performing this work and if so, what did you learn?
- Do you enjoy listening to the other pieces performed at the concerts you have attended? Which have been your favorites or least favorites?

Rehearsal and Performance Process

- How did you experience the rehearsal process leading up to the concert?
- Do you feel there were enough rehearsals? Were you given enough time for adequate preparation?
- What are the positive and negative aspects of having the composer of the work you are performing present at the rehearsals and performances of the pieces?
- Would you like to comment on the way you were compensated (or not compensated) for your time by the WCPE?

Other

- Do you perform with any other ensembles?

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