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Women, Gender and Identity in Popular Music-Making in Gauteng, 1994 - 2012

by

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A dissertation submitted for the degree of Master of Music

in the Wits School of Arts, Faculty of Humanities,

University of the Witwatersrand

DECLARATION

This dissertation is the result of my own work and includes nothing that is the outcome of work done in collaboration.



C.J. Moelwyn-Hughes

June 2013

ABSTRACT

Women, Gender and Identity in Popular Music-Making in Gauteng, 1994 - 2012

This thesis offers an ethnographic study of the professional lives of twenty-eight women musicians working in Gauteng and their experiences in popular music-making in post-apartheid South Africa. The study is based primarily on interviews with a spectrum of women working as professional musicians, mostly as performers, but also in varied roles within the music industry. I focus on various aspects of women musicians' personal reports: identify patterns of experience in their formative years; discuss seminal relationships that influence their music-making; and note gender stereotypes, identifying and commenting on their effect on individuals. Feminist, cultural, post-colonial, musicological and ethnomusicological theory informs the empirical research and is used to interrogate meanings of identity, stereotypes about women on stage and strategies of performance that women adopt.

The experiences of these twenty-eight women demonstrate that gender both positively and negatively affects their careers. Women are moving into previously male-dominated areas of contemporary music-making in South Africa such as jazz and playing certain instruments, both traditionally considered to be in the ‘male’ domain. However, despite women’s rights being well protected under current legislation, women in South Africa do not access legal recourse available to them in extreme situations of sexual harassment in the music industry. This study provides an imperative for anthropological methods of enquiry to be applied to popular music to interrogate individual and social meanings in music. It suggests practical ways of improving the lives of women in professional music careers by improving access to legal aid and educational training for women musicians. I suggest possible ways this knowledge can impact positively on the broad redefinition of gender roles in South Africa in the post-apartheid era, such as more sensitive media reporting and whistle-blowing on sexual harassment cases.

For my mother

Valda Bailey

‘But we insignificant people with our daily words and acts are preparing the lives of many Dorotheas … the effect of her being on those around her was incalculably diffusive: for the growing good of the world is partly dependent on unhistoric acts; and that things are not so ill with you and me as they might have been, is half owing to the number who lived faithfully a hidden life, and rest in unvisited tombs.’

—GEORGE ELIOT (1871 [1994]: 383)

CONTENTS

Abstract		iii
Acknowledgements		vii
List of Abbreviations		viii
'Saxophonist'		ix
Preface		x
1	**Introduction: Research Methods and Theoretical Framework**	1
	Personal motivation and key approaches	1
	Central aims and questions	4
	Research methods	5
	A decision against textual analysis	7
	Format of the interviews	8
	Ethical considerations	9
	Theoretical framework	11
	The South African music industry	25
	Women in South African music performance	28
	South African legislation on the rights of women	30
2	**Formative Experiences, Relationships and Power Tensions**	33
	Introduction	33
	Early influences and family attitudes affecting women's choice of a musical career	35
	Further important relationships: support and lack of support for women's careers	42
	Motherhood	54
	Sexual Vibes	59
	Sexual harassment and rape	60
	The male protector	67
	Conclusion	71
3	**Identity**	73
	Introduction	74
	Consciousness and identity	78

Race and identity 78
Sexuality, sexual persuasion and homophobia 85
Age, image and sexuality 90
Place, nationality and identity 95
Performance and identity 98
Confidence, musical identity and music-making 104
Solo artists 109
Conclusion 113

4 Sirens and Songbirds: How Women Negotiate Stereotypes 115

Embodiment 116
Stereotypes in discourse: divas and songbirds 119
Strategies of self-representation 126
The performance of girlhood 127
Women as sirens 129
Individualism: humour and quirkiness 134
Women instrumentalists 137
Embodiment: male desire and aberrant female images 138
Women instrumentalists as novelties: advantages and disadvantages 141
All women-bands: jazz bands, corporate entertainment and theatre shows 143
Conclusion 149

5 Conclusion 151

6 Bibliography 159

7 Discography 178

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

A&R	Artist and Repertoire
AIRCO	The Association of Independent Record Companies AIRCO
BCEA	The Basic Conditions of Employment Act 75 of 1997
BMSC	Bantu Men's Social Centre
BMus	Bachelor of Music
BW	*Bantu World*
CCMA	The Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration
CD	compact disc
CDs	compact discs
D	*Drum*
DJ	disc-jockey
ID	Identity Document
EEA	The Employment Equity Act 55 of 1998
ILN	*Ilanga*
Joburg	Johnnesburg
LRA	The Labour Relations Act 66 of 1995
NSA	National School of the Arts
ODP	Oral Documentation Project
PAWE	Performing Arts Workers Equity
POSA	Performers' Organisation of South Africa
res	university residence
R&B	Rhythm and Blues
RISA	The Recording Industry of South Africa
SA	South Africa
SABC	South African Broadcasting Corporation
SAMAs	South African Music Awards
SAMRO	South African Music Rights Organization
SBNYJF	Standard Bank National Youth Jazz Festival
TUT	Tswane University of Technology
UCT	The University of Cape Town
UK	United Kingdom
US	United States (of America)
UNISA	The University of South Africa
Wits	The University of the Witwatersrand
Z	*Zonk*

Saxophonist

I told my friend that I'd
been blown away by a lady
saxophonist. He grinned.
You know the story about
the woman saxophone-player
don't you? No! I said. He said,
Nor do I, but I'm sure there
is one. Cheeky devil!

I'll remember that
pursed mouth and those
cool, rippling fingers, and…
oh yes, that sublime music,
yes, the improvised harmony;
wonderful! She'll live in my
heart forever. Or at least
until next week.

—MIKE ALFRED (unpublished poem given to author)

Preface

After hearing me perform impromptu at a social gathering, poet Mike Alfred wrote about my performance. He gave the poem to me as a present, saying with a naughty smile: 'I think this will both delight and revile you.'

When I read it, my reaction was disappointment: yet another man comments on the spectacle of me—a woman playing saxophone—and not my music. This poem expresses *his* delight rather, captured in amused, imagined banter between male friends. He comments only secondarily on a woman making music, but first on her body as she does so. Ultimately it was the image of a woman playing a man's instrument that struck him. He jests at the end: 'She'll live in my heart forever. Or at least until next week'—however, the otherness of a woman saxophonist did warrant writing a poem.

This incident encapsulates how attention so frequently focuses on women musicians' bodies; in my experience, this is particularly so for women instrumentalists. The visual impression is often as striking as the music made, and this is a challenge women musicians must negotiate.

'Don't take it the wrong way, but you don't play like a girl. You play with balls!' This is a compliment I have been given many times, always generously, but one that leaves me reeling internally, wondering why the reference point of accomplishment for a musician is only ever masculine. What is the experience of other women musicians, I wondered? This question served as a point of departure for my work in this thesis based on the experience and perceptions of women making music professionally in South Africa. I hope their insights shed some light on this sometimes positive, sometime precarious career choice.

CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION: RESEARCH METHODS AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

'And I'm tired of them talking about "women in music", like it's new. Women have always been in this music. But the men have been at the front of it.'
—ABBEY LINCOLN (Baraka 2001: 5)

'What is always needed in the appreciation of art, or life is the larger perspective. Connections made, or at least attempted, where none existed before, the straining to encompass in one's glance at the varied world the common thread, the unifying theme through immense diversity.'
—ALICE WALKER (In Kolmar and Bartkowski 2005: 508)

'I always had this dream that one day I would become a good musician and I would go out there, and that people would think: wow, a female saxophonist!'
—NDITHINI MBALI (Int. 2006)

This thesis offers an ethnographic study of the professional lives of twenty-eight women musicians working in Gauteng, South Africa, and their experiences in music-making.[1] It is not a comprehensive study of all women working professionally in the Gauteng area and the South African music industry; it does not concentrate on the most famous women musicians or the most artistically-revered women active in the contemporary music scene. Rather it presents an investigation of the working lives of a spectrum of women who work in varied roles within the music industry, most predominantly in the sphere of live music performance.

Personal motivation and key approaches

My interest in this topic began from my own participation in local music. After completing a Bachelor of Music (1996) in the tradition of Western art music, my experience as a music teacher and performing saxophonist led me into varied types of music-making. These include playing in local jazz and African bands, a gospel band, theatre work, session playing,

[1] I use the term 'women musicians' to refer to both female vocalists and instrumentalists. When I specifically mean a singer/vocalist as opposed to an instrumentalist or vice versa, I use these terms.

pop bands, big bands, and in the traditional Western classical musical setting of orchestral and chamber music performances.

My own experience of some frustrations as a woman instrumentalist has led me to believe that women should assert themselves in professional music, yet the process of doing so can be challenging. Very often I have been the only female member of a band, and there have been times when I felt added pressure as a woman to 'prove' myself in a line of work dominated by men. Many male musicians may consider gender irrelevant to ability and performance as a musician. However, as Suzanne Cusick points out, gender is 'always a concern for women' for 'gender somehow marks a woman – as not a man, not the norm, not the universal' (Cusick 1999: 474). Gender is one aspect in our social and cultural identity construction, hence my wish to investigate the experience of other women musicians working professionally in the Gauteng region today.

Key to my approach in this study, are two theoretical ideas: firstly, it is possible to apply anthropological methods in the study of popular music made in an urban environment, and secondly, the idea that not only famous or 'star' musicians are worthy of investigation. I do not contest the cultural value that many such musicians bring to the societies in which they make music. However, it is my conviction that the practices and experiences of 'hidden musicians'—to use Ruth Finnegan's term—are worthy of study (1989). In her study of amateur music-making by local musicians and their performances in the British town of Milton Keynes, Finnegan investigated 'an invisible but organised system through which individuals make their contribution to both the changes and the continuities of English music today' (1989: 4). She explains:

> I think of this set of practices as 'hidden' in two ways. One is that it has been so little drawn to our attention by systematic research or writing. There has been little work in this country on the 'micro-sociology' of amateur music; and, incredibly, questions on active music-making as such (as distinct from attendance at professional events or participation in artistic groups generally) seldom or never appear in official surveys—almost as if local music-making did not exist at all. Thus academics and planners alike have somehow found it easy to ignore something which is in other ways so remarkably obvious. (ibid.)

Finnegan's work set a precedent for not only studying the 'greats'—so much the focus of the canon of musicology until recent years—and validated the study of practice rather than theory (ibid: xiii and 4).[2]

[2] I observed resonance with Finnegan's term 'the hidden musicians' in Belinda Bozzoli's book *The Women of Phokeng*, in which she describes the intention of that study 'to record the stories of those whose lives are hidden from history' (1991: 5).

Motivated by Finnegan's application of anthropological methods to her local environment in contemporary Britain and focus on local musicians, I adapted her method to investigate not amateur musicians, but the professional lives of female musicians, both singers and instrumentalists, who sustain careers in music even if they are not high-profile public figures. Similarly, Lucy Green's study on the learning practices of popular musicians influenced this study. 'I did not interview any major pop or rock "stars" explains Green in the preface to her study:

> Although their lives as star musicians may be rather different to the lives of the musicians I interviewed, there are no reasons to suppose that their learning practices have ever been significantly different. Furthermore, there is, of course, a category of stars who have risen to fame more by virtue of luck, looks, ambition and manipulation by the music industry than by virtue of any particular commitment to acquiring musicianship; and it is the acquisition of musicianship, rather than fame, that I am interested in. Behind these kinds of stars, there are nearly always session musicians, without whose skills the music would not be possible and very likely not commercially successful either. (2002: 11)

Hence while some of the women I interviewed are well known in the public sphere, others make their living without having achieved wide fame or star status.

Finnegan explained that 'what was going on around' her was an equally-interesting subject to her usual anthropological focus on 'performance outside Britain', and linked 'with many of the traditional scholarly questions about the social contexts and processes of artistic activity and human relationships' (1989: ix). Similarly, I was motivated to investigate the experiences of the musicians in the profession around me, both those with whom I work and those I observe from a greater distance. In my experience, a large majority of musicians in Johannesburg continually work in a variety of performance contexts, whether in live performances (leading their own projects or performing in those of others) or in the recording studio. They also work in projects of varying degrees of popularity, magnitude and artistic value; with many different types of other musicians and music industry professionals (such as production managers, sound engineers and event promoters), and in jobs secured by both verbal and written contracts, well-paid and poorly-paid. I was interested to explore how women musicians experienced making music and the relationships involved through all these different activities a career usually entails.

Certainly my experience in music-making led me into this research, and bell hooks' statement has personal resonance: 'I came to theory desperate, wanting to comprehend – to grasp what was happening around and within me' (hooks 2004: 2). However, I did not

choose to follow the 'passionate scholarship' of Karla Holloway (1994: 198) which combines scholarship with personal reminiscences. Rather, I have gathered evidence from interviews and written sources and used, as Ruth Finnegan asserts, 'specific case studies to lead to the kind of illumination in depth not provided by more thinly spread and generalised accounts' (1989: 4).

Central aims and questions

Through field research achieved by interviewing selected women musicians currently involved in music-making in the Johannesburg area, I ultimately hope to address this central question: How does gender mark the professional lives of female musicians working in popular music in post-apartheid South Africa? Subsidiary questions to this question are: To what extent does gender affect the relationships and interactions women have with other people in the context of their music-making? To what extent does gender inform these women's identities as musicians and as people? What else constitutes and constructs these identities?

The period of enquiry was limited to the years since democracy in South Africa was achieved in 1994. This period is demarcated from the pre-1994 years because the new dispensation introduced legislation with regard to gender equality and rights (outlined towards the end of this chapter) that protects women's rights and has tried to reformulate public attitudes regarding gender. I hope to assess to what extent these musicians' identities and music have been reformulated in a post-apartheid society. Other aims of this research are to investigate whether these laws have actually affected the lives of women musicians and to interrogate to what extent the changing political, social and economic circumstances of my chosen subjects in post-apartheid South Africa have stimulated changes in music-making. For instance, is there better access to education and training that positively affects the number of young women going into music professionally? Are women moving into genres they were not in before, such as jazz, or innovating new genres? Are women occupying new roles in the music industry that they were not previously?

Ultimately, I hope to assess whether women working as musicians in contemporary South Africa are expanding or redefining the boundaries of their professional space and established

definitions of female music-making. In considering my central question through the discussions which follow, I ask: Are they making an impact on gender relations in the environments in which they work? Are they contributing to the redefinition of gender roles more generally in society in any way?

Research methods

I chose Johannesburg as the focus area for the study, as this is where I work and live and could most effectively undertake participant observation. Further, Johannesburg is a cosmopolitan urban environment and a major centre of music-making in South Africa. I also chose to focus my investigation on 'popular music': I use this term very broadly to refer to popular music, jazz, and urbanized African music (created in an urban rather than a rural environment). Motivated in part to explore why women are in the minority in certain areas of local music-making, I excluded female performers active only in the Western classical field of music-making because, firstly, I observed more women working in this sector compared to popular music and jazz and, secondly, my experience (and that of colleagues) in the area of classical music-making is that it is generally more legislated by contracts of employment than in popular music-making.[3]

Beginning this study, my intention was to interview musicians from as wide a social spectrum as possible, involving as many styles of local music as possible, and including both female vocalists and instrumentalists; young and old; of any race; well established and those yet seeking experience and recognition. Significantly, the choice of subjects was not based on their commercial success or my own judgment of musical ability, but rather that they should be professional not amateur musicians. However, practical limitations in containing the scope of this study need explanation. Firstly, these limitations of choice resulted in my sample not reflecting the full spectrum of South African popular music genres: I did not interview *kwaito* artists and only one respondent had worked (albeit extensively) in Afrikaans music. Nonetheless, a broad spread of experience in different genres is reflected, including: Afro-pop, pop, rock, gospel, folk, jazz, acid-jazz, electronica, house, rap, recorded

[3] More gender parity has entered the profession in this field, however this is not to say that it is devoid of issues of sexism and exclusion (see Fuller 1995: 22-36).

music for children, musical theatre and corporate entertainment functions.[4] Secondly, my original intention was to interview women of all ages, and the ages of the women of my respondents range (at the time of the interview) from twenty-one to early sixties. It must be noted that I did not interview older women who are still active as musicians in their seventies such as Dorothy Masuka and Thandi Klaasen. I stopped interviewing after speaking to twenty-eight women.[5]

This study is then primarily based on interviews with vocalists and instrumentalists active in the genres mentioned above. Also interviewed were a prominent female music journalist, a music-fixer[6] and three musical directors, although the scope of this research did not include interviews with women active in other roles in the music industry such as: Disc Jockeys (DJs), sound engineers, event co-ordinators, Artist and Repertoire (A & R) managers, agents or other types of artist managers. As this work will reveal, however, the musicians interviewed alluded to the paucity of women in these roles. Further, the instrumentalists and vocalists interviewed fulfill musical roles not simply as performers, but also as composers, bandleaders, arrangers, producers and music educators. Of my twenty-eight respondents, six are vocalists, nine are vocalists as well as instrumentalists, twelve are exclusively instrumentalists and one is not a musician but an author and journalist.

There are two last points of significance with regard to my sample. Firstly, although the majority of women work as vocalists in contemporary South African music, I did try to include a high proportion of instrumentalists. As already stated, this project examines the working lives of both female singers and instrumentalists. While there have been many female South African singers who have gained recognition, female instrumentalists remain in the minority. This is a situation paralleled in jazz and popular music elsewhere (see for example Placksin 1982; Dahl 1984; Gourse 1995; O'Brien 1995), and discussed in more depth later in this chapter. As my interviews progressed, the low number of professional female instrumentalists working in popular music was confirmed, and persuaded me to speak to further instrumentalists to explore the reasons for their minority. Moreover, the paucity, in

[4] By 'music theatre' I do not refer only to musical revue shows but also to the genre of shows of 'covers' of bands, styles and eras that has proved popular in South Africa over the past decade and a half, as well as internationally (notably on Broadway and the West End).
[5] I also did not formally interview male cultural producers and commentators, as this was beyond the scope of this research.
[6] This is the generic term for a person who hires musicians for gigs (rather than agent whose job extends to actively promoting the careers of the musicians on his/her books).

particular, of black female instrumentalists working professionally in popular music became obvious, and also of instrumentalists (of any race) in jazz. For this reason—while the majority of interviews were done in 2006—my last interview was in 2012 with a black female trumpeter.

A decision against textual analysis

This study does not employ textual analysis of either music or lyrics. While there is some mention in my thesis of specific music created by a few of my interviewees, I decided against employing an in-depth textual analysis for several reasons. Firstly, the broad scope of ethnographic evidence assimilated from interviews (including valuable unexpected emphases and insights from the women) became extensive and significant, and I wish to give voice to these issues that face these professional women musicians. Secondly, I realized that textual analysis would not answer my central questions in a more substantial or illuminating way than concentration on the women's own articulation of issues of concern and areas of achievement would do. Thirdly, and most importantly, I feel ethically bound to pass *no judgment* on any of my interviewees, neither on their music-making nor their views or insights. Inevitably I had to perceive similarities and themes and choose references and omit some material due to the confines of this thesis. Nonetheless, women spoke to me with the certain understanding that my intention in interviewing them was to explore the experiences of a number of female musicians working professionally in the Gauteng music industry, and not to pass value appraisals.[7]

One may question the validity of a work that does not focus on music *itself*.[8] Indeed, this remained a point of concern to me throughout the writing up of this research. However, as much as this work is framed by fields in which textual analysis is considered to be the norm (popular music studies, ethnomusicology and musicology), it is also informed by the work of scholars whose case-studies of musicians are devoid of textual analysis.[9] In investigating

[7] My 'insider' status as a female musician, often known to my respondents as a colleague before our interview, is pertinent here.
[8] Viet Erlmann for instance writes: 'Although recorded sound material must form the backbone of any serious study of popular music, it constitutes perhaps one of the most poorly defined categories of ethnomusicological evidence for which analytical criteria of historical interpretation still need to be elaborated' (1991: 13).
[9] For instance, jazz scholars Sally Placksin (1982), Linda Dahl (1984) and Sherrie Tucker (2000; 2008) write social histories of American women jazz musicians and writers Mavis Bayton (1993) and Lucy O'Brien (1995) do the same about women in rock music.

the emergent identity of women musicians in post-apartheid South Africa, I maintain my focus on the issues and concerns that *music-making raises* for these women, rather than on the *music they make.*

Fundamental to my approach, then, is the importance of gaining knowledge from field research on the working conditions and concerns of musicians, and the processes through which they make music; rather than from an analysis of their music. The value of this investigation lies rather in identifying areas of the women's activity and success (or the absence of such), and areas in which the Gauteng music industry could embrace change to encourage participation by women musicians.

Format of the interviews

Rather than a formal questionnaire, the interviews were based on a loose set of questions, outlined below, that focused the discussion on some central issues. The interviews took the form of a conversation, rather than a formal question and answer session. In all cases, I communicated my intention to ask certain questions, but that I was as interested in whatever the subject may wish to say. Each interview ended with my asking the subject if there were any other points we had not discussed that she wished to raise.

The following broad areas were discussed with each respondent:

1. **Her background and relationships:**
   What has her musical education been or was she self-taught? What are the experiences that have helped form her as a musician? Were there conflicts between her desire to become a musician and the perception of gender roles within her culture? What were the aims at the beginning of her career: what helped her break-through (achieve commercial success and/or artistic recognition)? What has she achieved? What does she now aim for and still hope to achieve? Is there a further break-through she wishes for? What are her relationships with people she works with (such as fellow musicians, people that hire her, promoters and producers), and also with people in her life (such as friends, family, or agents): how far have these relationships facilitated or undermined her as a musician, helping or hindering her as she developed her career? What are the dynamics between

her career and family demands? Have these changed in various stages of her career as a musician?

2. Her music:

Within which musical genres is she actively music-making? What does she hope to achieve and express in her music? Who is it intended to appeal to? What are the stylistic influences on her music? Have others ever manipulated her music in the recording process, or does she retain creative control? Which roles does she assume in her music-making (singing, playing an instrument, composing, arranging, bandleading, directing, teaching, producing etc.)?

3. Stage performance:

What informs her choice of instruments, clothes and movement on stage? To what extent does she feel that she and the female performer in general, are 'embodied' on stage? Does she resist or embrace this notion? How does she deal with other people's perceptions of her and her music? What does she think about other female (and male) performers and performance styles?

Ethical considerations

In South Africa, the history of racial exploitation makes the issues of valuing an interviewee's time and expertise vital in order to avoid the development of an exploitative relationship between researcher and researched in any situation (Bozzoli 1992: 11). Similarly, the issue of reciprocity is particularly salient (Allen 2006: 65). The issues of responsible ethnographic practice concerning power, language skills, respect and trust, as well as identity differences between myself and my respondents, were confronted in the field. In some instances, I invested time in getting to know a subject first. I did not consciously experience difficulty or antagonism from my interviewees in my interviews.[10] There were generally two points of common ground: firstly, my being a woman, and secondly, my 'insider' status as a musician. Several women out of the twenty-eight I interviewed I did not know well or at all. However, I was acknowledged as a performing

[10] Lara Allen's article 'From Rights to Responsibilities' was very influential on my understanding of the issues and ethics at stake in this type of ethnographic research within the context of interviewing women musicians in South Africa (2006: 50-80). My research was also informed by texts on conducting feminist research (Letherby 2003); ethnographic responsibility (Wolf 1992); and oral history, ethnographic responsibility and interview technique (Grele 1985; Ochs and Capps 1996; Plummer 1983; Thiong'o 1998).

musician and recognised as a colleague who has shared stages with these women (even if our personal contact had been minimal before I approached someone for an interview). What I did not expect, however, was the extent to which the difficult and intimate issues of sexual harassment and, in three instances, rape would arise in these conversations (see Chapter Two).

Sometimes, a woman interviewed would tell me something she deemed to be confidential and asked to 'speak off the record'. These requests have been respected. Often, however, challenging incidents were discussed, and a woman would mention names of people involved, and state that she deliberately wished to speak 'on the record'. These incidents fall into two categories: experiences women related of being exploited artistically and financially in the music industry and, more predominantly, experiences related of being sexually harassed or raped. I have, however, decided this is not the appropriate forum in which to 'name and shame' and have concealed names (on occasions including the names of women interviewed), even where women spoke 'on the record', in order to protect people's confidentiality. Nonetheless, these incidents raise important issues, which were discussed in interviews. Moreover, these issues suggest the potential for future research in this area.

I now outline the theoretical approaches from different academic disciplines that frame discussions in the following chapters. Chapters Two to Four are based on information gained from interviews.

Theoretical Framework

This study is inevitably interdisciplinary through its focus on women, gender, identity and popular music, its South African location, and ethnographic approach. Richard Middleton contends that popular music can be properly understood only through an interdisciplinary method—a cultural theory of music (1990: v). Yet pertinent to my research is the reality that, until recently, there remained relatively little academic research on women even within popular music in cultural studies.

While the academic study of music outside the traditional Western art music canon—such as jazz, popular music, and non-Western music—has become increasingly recognised and institutionalised over the past few decades, there is relatively little research on women performers in music, particularly with regard to South African artists. Before I briefly outline the research which has been published to date, I will contextualise research on women and gender in music within some of the 'rethinking' about music that has come about in the past thirty years.

Joseph Kerman (1985) problematised the perceived autonomy of traditional musicology by exposing the contested relations between music history, music theory, music criticism and ethnomusicology. A loss of confidence in the disciplinary integrity of musicology appeared in reactions to Kerman's work, which sparked new debate about the importance of situating musical structures within their larger cultural contexts, and gave rise to what became known as 'new musicology'. At the same time, from the 1960s onwards, other theoretical approaches such as post-modernism, feminism and post-colonialism posed new challenges within musicological thinking.[11] Feminist musicologist Susan McClary's book *Feminist Endings: Music, Gender and Sexuality* (1991) 'served as the lightning rod for the initial controversy' (McClary 1993: 411). She posed intellectual, musical, and political challenges to the autonomy of traditional musicology by focusing on the omission of women from musical canons, and dared to discuss sexuality in relation to the canon. Ruth Solie's collection, *Musicology and Difference* (1993), added weight to the challenge from McClary: where are the women in music and in music's history, they ask, and what are the typical ways in which women in music have been represented? Cusick's claim that the 'perceived marginality of gender to musicology has reinforced the discipline's historical marginalisation of women's musical experiences' resonates with me (1999: 474).

In Africa, ethnomusicologists, postcolonial scholars, notably Kofi Agawu (2003), and organisations such as the Pan African Society for Musical Arts Education (PASMAE), are

[11] By the 1970s, the interdisciplinary field of Cultural Studies—originally very focused on the work of the Frankfurt School—had incorporated seminal theoretical approaches from these fields too, as well as from post-structuralism and sociology. Popular Music Studies became an important field within cultural theory, particularly in Britain (Frith and McRobbie 1978; Grossberg 1992; Hall 1992; Frith 1996; Hall and du Gay 1996; Middleton 1990, 2000). However, popular music studies provided less of a threat to musicology because it considered the subject material to be 'low' not 'high' culture and outside the canon.

questioning the dominance of Western musicology.[12] Popular music in Africa, in particular, has become a major site for thinking through politics as it affects music: a vehicle for expressing and receiving seminal concerns in popular culture, and one increasingly thought to be worthy of academic investigation (see for example Meintjes 2003).

Important accounts of the history of South African popular music include: in the 1980s, Muff Anderson's colourful account of popular music in the apartheid years (1981), Charles Hamm's *Afro-American Music, South Africa and Apartheid* (1988) and David Coplan's extensive social history written on South African music (1985); in the 1990s, Veit Erlmann's case studies in black urban South African music (1991) and *isicathamiya* (1996), Christopher Ballantine's work on early South African jazz and vaudeville (1993)[13] and Lara Allen's work on kwela (1993). Other more recent contributions to the field include: Lara Allen's PhD thesis 'Representation, Gender and Women in Black South African Popular Music, 1948-1960' (2000); Gwen Ansell's extensive history of jazz and popular music in South Africa and its relation to politics (2004); Kathryn Olsen's work on *maskanda* (2000); Michael Titlestad (2004) and Nishlyn Ramanna's (2005) work on jazz and discourse, and Christine Lucia's anthology (2005) of a number of sources and perspectives in writing about music in South Africa.[14]

The above list is by no means exhaustive but crucially frames my reading and understanding of popular music in South Africa. The majority of these texts, however, document the involvement of male musicians to a far greater extent than those of women. Erlmann's work, for instance, almost excludes women all together. In part this is because, quite simply, there were and are more men making music to write about than women (and in Erlmann's case studies he was researching styles of music made exclusively by men—like *isicathamiya*—or individual male musicians). Nonetheless, all these texts provide interesting perspectives on

[12] While attending the first international PASMAE conference in Kisumu, Kenya, in July 2004, I was made aware of how this society of African academics, scholars and teachers is seeking to find new ways of formalising, incorporating and celebrating the teaching of African music. The redefinition of women's roles in both traditional and hybridised African musical styles was also a subject of hot debate between both male and female conference participants. This highlights the idea that there is a simultaneous rethinking about musicology going on in Africa and the West, and also underlines the need to document African musical practices, musicians and issues.

[13] Christine Lucia points out that Ballantine's 'Adornian approach in his sociological analysis of early jazz' (1984) influenced 'an entire generation of South African writing about the relationship of music to society, writing that intensified in the late apartheid era' (2005: xliii).

[14] The selections of writing Lucia collates are certainly not all about popular music, yet her selections of research on popular music are illuminated by being placed in the context of broader scholarship about different musics in South Africa.

gender too, even if focused on men. Embedded—particularly in the texts written before apartheid's end—are stories of the exploitation and resistance that have characterised colonial and apartheid South Africa in the twentieth century. They describe how popular music emerged as a vital expression of urban, black South Africans in their pursuit of an autonomous cultural identity in a fiercely oppressive society. As Kathryn Olsen explains in her discussion of Zulu masculinity, music can serve 'not simply as a reflection of experience but also as a form of action' (2001: 53).

At the time I began research for this thesis, however, Lara Allen's work on women in black South African popular music from the 1920s up to 1960 remained the most in-depth study in this field (2000), and provides valuable background to my research on women and gender since 1994. Of importance, the second edition of Christopher Ballantine's *Marabi Nights* was published in 2012, incorporating new chapters previously published in journal articles, adding an important contribution to work on gender and music in South Africa. Below I shall discuss the different implications of their work, prefaced by some comments on other pertinent work on women and gender. I will first locate my research a little more firmly in the context of two significant areas of influence: feminism and post-colonialism.

My focus on gender and women and the approach I have adopted are framed by feminist thinking: I investigate how women operate in a largely male-dominated sphere. While feminism has many trajectories, it can be broadly described as asserting the need for women to be afforded the right to their own voices, the right to make decisions that affect their own lives, and basic human rights such as equal access to law, to education, to medicine, and to the workplace. As Robert Young states, in the process, these institutions themselves are changed 'so that they no longer continue to represent only male interests and perspectives' (2003: 6). Adrienne Rich (1984), Audre Lorde (2003) and the postcolonial theorist Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (1988), amongst others, further acknowledge that racial, historical, social and political differences are the realistic conditions of female living. Of central importance to my research is Rich's position that women's experiences and areas of knowledge are situated—always marked by ethnicity and race (2003)—as well as bell hooks' notion that the concepts of otherness and difference must be anchored specifically to the politics of race and gender (2001). In addition, Trinh Minh-ha (1989) further challenges Western feminists by stressing the importance of recognising the diversity of women in developing countries, an idea pertinent to research on women in post-apartheid South Africa

– a context that is, in many ways, uniquely marked by unequal relations with the 'developed' world.

My investigation concerns the constitution of subjectivity, specifically the impact of power, representation and discourse on subject formation. The critique of essentialism within feminism,[15] along with similar questioning in postmodern and post-colonial thought, has been an important influence in the deconstruction of Enlightenment models of the Subject (a normative male subject) within literary theory. Judith Butler argues that gender is not a fixed identity but is constructed by the body's repeated performances of gender: 'that the gendered body is performative suggests that it has no ontological status apart from the various acts which constitute its reality' (Butler 2002: 500). In other words, gender is a fantasy, instituted and inscribed on the surface of bodies. Similarly, Steven Greenblatt suggests that 'new historicism … eschews the use of the term "man"; interest lies not in the abstract universal, but in the particular, contingent cases, the selves fashioned and acting, according to the generative rules and conflicts of a given culture' (2001: 308). In my investigation, I discuss individuals who function in a culture that is not stable but informed by a dense network of evolving and often contradictory social forces. I also consider Michel Foucault's analysis of how power is exercised: it 'is not something that is acquired, seized or shared, something one holds on to or allows to slip away; power is exercised from innumerable points, in the interplay of non-egalitarian and mobile relations' (1981: 94).

Like the notion of culture, identity is problematic because it is not fixed, but is, rather, multiple and mobile, constantly changing (see for example Hall 1992 and Gilroy 1993). Social identities are constructed by many factors including race, ethnicity, place, gender, power, age, sexual persuasion, nationality, religious and political persuasion, educational background and career stage. Even in an extreme racially-coded space such as South Africa, people's real lives are made up of many contradictions and ambiguities (Bozzoli 1991: 6; Allen 2004: 29). The resulting ambiguous and complicated concepts of identity and culture are confronted in my investigation, particularly in my discussion about identity, music and creativity in Chapter Three. These issues are also framed by some of the concerns of post-colonialism. As Robert Young asserts:

[15] Essentialism within feminism would be thinking of sexual difference as 'innate, natural, inborn and persistent'; to falsely presume sisterhood between all women; to imagine there to be a unitary female voice or culture that signifies all women, and/or to refer to the universal oppression of women (Cosslett, Easton and Summerfield 1996: 45).

> Postcolonialism stands for a transformational politics … dedicated to the removal of inequality – from the different degrees of wealth of the different states in the world system, to the class, ethnic, and other social hierarchies within individual states, to the gendered hierarchies that operate at every level of social and cultural relations. (2003: 114)

The articulation of anxieties about voice and authority in the context of colonial and postcolonial discourses, and the preoccupation with relations between power and knowledge in the construction of 'otherness' have been central to post-colonialist thinking (see for example Said (1978), Bhabha (2001) and Spivak (1989)). As Foucault posits, knowledge acquired about the world is actually produced in the network of discourses and discursive practices about it, and these discourses are also formations of power that not only delineate specific inclusions but also enforce overt and covert exclusions (1981: 95). These issues bear consideration in my investigation of the experiences of women who operate in an arguably male-dominated industry that marginalises them, but who also operate within a culture that is itself seen as 'other'.

South Africa is marginalised because its geographical location is outside the epicentre of North America and Europe. Although many issues raised by post-colonialism are relevant to South Africa, apartheid affected the country in ways that not only post-colonial theory can illuminate, even if helpful. Post-colonialism has explored how the idea of 'nation' has been one of the strongest foci for resistance to imperial control in colonial societies (Fanon 1967). In South Africa, while apartheid policy entrenched ethnicity and racism, the resistance struggle was mobilised along nationalist ideals. Here Paul Gilroy's concept of a black Atlantic culture whose themes and techniques transcend ethnicity and nationality (1993) is pertinent in its challenge to many of the practices and assumptions of cultural studies. Shireen Hassim's work (2006) in particular examines the vexed relationship between nationality and feminism in South Africa (which I return to shortly).

The work of these theorists grounds the question asked in my subsequent chapters: to what extent is the 'post' in post-colonialism and post-apartheid actually experienced in the real lives of South African women? Also fundamental to all my discussions is an evaluation of the agency that women possess in the processes of making music, which I bring to the fore in my conclusion. Greenblatt explains how agency is crucial to new historicism's vision of history:

> Even inaction or extreme marginality is understood to possess meaning and therefore to imply intention. Every form of behaviour, in this view, is a strategy: taking up arms or taking flight is a

> significant social action, but so is staying put, minding one's own business, turning one's face to the wall. Agency is virtually inescapable. (2001: 308)

This insistence on agency is a theme that also runs though feminism, for instance in the work of Hazel Carby on rediscovering the agency of black women in struggling against slavery and oppression (2003). I will not generalise that all women who have sustained musical careers demonstrate agency and resilience. However, areas where women's agency is evident in furthering their careers do emerge in the discussions in Chapters Two to Four which follow.

I now focus on some of the preceding research on women in music to locate my project more specifically. As mentioned above, feminist scholarship started to pose challenges to musicology in the 1970s but was largely ignored until the late 1980s by which time feminist work concerning music had, as Susan McClary describes, 'left its ghetto and broadened its scope to include re-examinations of the canon, standard methodologies, and much else' (1993: 399). There is an increasingly growing body of work on women and music (within the different disciplines of musicology, ethnomusicology, and popular music studies, as well as a recent emergence of gender as a particular focus in jazz studies). Of particular relevance to my discussions in the next chapters, are two themes which run through much research in this area: firstly, the sex-stereotyping of instruments and secondly, the historical exclusion of women from certain styles of music and/or areas of music-making.

Ethnomusicologist Ellen Koskoff writes about the relationship between musical instruments and styles being informed by gender, and issues of power and control (1987: 14). 'In many societies, musical roles are divided along gender lines: women sing and men play. Of course, men also sing, and women sometimes play; yet, unlike men, women who play often do so in contexts of sexual and social marginality' (1995: 114). This statement is based on extensive research in many different cultures and countries, including Western classical music, and draws on the work of other scholars (ibid.: 121):

> What appears to be central … is the notion that musical instruments are everywhere linked to gender ideologies, however culturally constructed and maintained. Such ideologies inform much of the symbolic content of musical instruments of their sounds, prescribe who shall and who shall not play, and under what circumstances performances will occur. Thus, on the one hand it appears that instruments and the sounds of instruments associated with men, with 'masculinity' or with male performance, are frequently linked to economic, ritual, and sexual power. Such instruments are often used by men to limit, control, or coerce women; or women may use them when confronting, borrowing, or protesting such power … On the other hand, instruments, their sounds, and performance contexts, associated with women tend to be devalued in many societies, that is, seen as associated with children or 'amateur' and/or linked to women's marginal social and sexual status, and performance by

> males on these instruments or in these contexts can result in similar social punishments for women. (ibid.: 122)

Allen, in her research on black South Africa women musicians (mostly singers but instrumentalists too), has taken up a further theme of Koskoff's that women who defy 'socially accepted roles' risk 'punishment, social ostracism or devaluation' (Koskoff 1995: 122; Allen 2000: 159-160). Similarly, writers about women in jazz have explained the difficulty for women who perform in environments considered to be socially deviant and unacceptable for women and who play stereotypically 'male instruments'.[16] Leslie Gourse and Linda Dahl, in particular, have written about how these factors historically dissuaded women from careers in music, a situation that did not significantly change until the last decades of the twentieth century.

Like these writers, Lucy Green also discusses the sex-stereotyping of instruments. In her work on music, gender and education, she distinguishes between the active (stereotypically male) areas of music-making—composing, improvising and conducting—and the passive (stereotypically female) areas of accompanying and teaching (1997: 82-115).[17] Her work explores such stereotypes about female musicians, as well as those regarding singers. She lists four implications for the 'displaying body' of the female singer: firstly, the 'constructions of a metaphorical mask (which both protects and draws attention to the body); secondly, the 'absence of technology' (which affirms patriarchy in its appreciation of this 'entirely feminine image'); thirdly, the association (in practically all known societies) with that of the sexual temptress or prostitute, and fourthly, the contrasted image of a 'mother privately singing to her baby' (the corollary of the association with 'public sexual availability') (Green 1997: 28-9). Green explains:

> These four characteristics of femininity—the self-possessed yet alluring concentration on the body, the association with nature, the appearance of sexual availability and the symbolization of maternal preoccupation—are affirmed and reproduced in the act of display invoked by women's singing. The contradictions which they involve, far from representing logically alternative or mutually exclusive positions, actually go together, to articulate a space in which femininity is constructed as contrary, desirable but dangerous, sexually available but maternally preoccupied. When we hear music sung by a woman, amongst a multitude of delineations arising from the music's production, distribution and reception contexts, there will be a gendered delineation: a delineation of her display, her femininity. (1997: 29-30)

Writing about the representation and reception of black women in the urban popular music of 1950s South Africa, Allen explains that 'public discourse about women musicians falls

[16] See Placksin (1982: 41), Dahl (1984: x), Koskoff (1987: 3), Gourse (1995: 7-8) and Tucker (2000:3-7).
[17] In her discussion of women in 1950s South Africa, Allen explains that music teachers 'were primarily received as educators rather than professional musicians, and were not compelled by their occupation to thwart codes of behaviour deemed socially acceptable for women' (2000: 213).

into two major areas characterised by the dichotomous roles of Madonna and whore classically projected onto women: mother and siren' (Allen 2000: 218). Similarly, Peter Antelyes has written about the phenomenon of the 'red hot mama' figures Bessie Smith and Sophie Tucker in 1920s America:

> As spelled out in her name, the mama was 'red hot' in her sexual appetite, and maternal in her authority, her allure, and her dangerously enveloping possessiveness. What was extraordinary was her embodiment of these traditionally opposed patriarchal fantasies of female power. More extraordinary still was her use of that embodiment to critique those fantasies, and demonstrate her own presence and authority. (1994: 213)

The dichotomies that Allen and Antelyes present are not quite the same, yet both make clear the idea of opposing and stereotypical roles that women fulfill because of the 'patriarchal fantasies' 'projected' on to them. The resonance with Green's ideas is strong. I juxtapose these three writers' ideas to reveal that stereotypes affecting women in South Africa are not unique but archetypes in human thinking. Green's discernment of female singers 'association with public sexual availability' is echoed in the work of Allen:

> In many cultures around the world women musicians are associated with implied or actual prostitution; in Africa, women involved in professional urban music making seem particularly vulnerable to this charge (Coplan 1985: 98-101; DjeDje 1985: 82; Koskoff 1987: 3; Impey 1992: 152-54; Chitauro, Dube and Gunner 1994: 111, 117-8). The high public profile of female black South African popular musicians exposes them to the potential of sexual exploitation, harassment and abuse at the hands of male members of the music industry, the media and the general public. During the 1930s and 1940s women who became professionally involved in music protected themselves, and were protected, by an aura of respectability and a set of strictly-kept social rules that guarded that respectability. (2000: 228)

Returning to historical exclusion of women from certain styles of music mentioned in relation to Koskoff's anthropological research, these ideas have been similarly echoed in the work of Antoinette Handy (1998), Linda Dahl (1984: x), and Sherrie Tucker (2000). Handy wrote the history of the International Sweethearts of Rhythm, an almost exclusively black, all-girl jazz orchestra from Mississippi who toured the United States (US) in the 1930s and 1940s. Until her book, they had been largely ignored and excluded by the writers of historiographies of jazz. Sherrie Tucker further explores the careers of the Sweethearts of Rhythm—following Handy and Dahl's earlier work—and of other all-girl bands of the period. Hers is a concerted academic attempt to expose the 'devaluation and absence' of these women in jazz in the historical record (2000: 3).[18] Her research has informed the writing of prominent American jazz journalist Nat Hentoff who has done much in recent years to raise the profile of women in jazz (2001; 2008).

[18] Her title *Swing Shift* comes from the term given women jazz musicians who filled in for absent men away at war during the Second World War (2000: 2).

Similar issues for women instrumentalist regarding training, acceptance and sexual stereotypes have been researched in popular music studies, particularly in Britain and the US.[19] Sheila Whitely, in particular, has analysed the changing styles of women in Anglo-American pop music and their relevance to debates on feminism and sexuality (1997; 2000).[20] Sue Steward investigates similar concerns in relation to women performers in salsa (1995). Lucy O'Brien has written of the difficulties women musicians as well as their successes in rock and pop music (1995; 2002). All these writers have been influenced by Susan McClary's feminist exploration of the semiotics of image in her discussion of Madonna (1991), and explore female imagery and iconography through case studies of pop and rock performers.

In Chapter Four, I discuss issues of embodiment for women on stage: a female performer's body becomes a site for cultural identification and/or imposed sexual identity. As Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin suggest, the body has become 'the literal site on which resistance and oppression have struggled, with the weapons being in both cases the physical signs of cultural difference … symbols and literal occasions of the power struggles of the dominater and dominated for possession of control and identity' (1995: 322). My discussion about embodiment in Chapter Four introduced above also draws on Judith Butler's idea of reconceptualising subjectivity: Butler argues for a performative interpretation of identity categories in her theory of performativity (1990). Allen also explores the embodiment of women artists in South Africa. She articulates the relations between the dominant and the deviant in constructions of sexuality, how women performers must function as both bodies and voices, mothers and sirens, and as objects of both racial pride and sexual desire (particularly reminiscent of Green's descriptions related above) (2000).[21]

In South Africa, existing research on women in music has been informed by historical and socio-political accounts, and accordingly my work is informed by the writing of, in particular, Jeff Guy (1990), Cherryl Walker (1982; 1990; 1995) and Deborah James (1991; 1994; 1999). Not mentioned in my previous account of South African research on popular

[19] See, for example, Evans (1994), Cooper (1995), Frith (1996) and Whitall (1998).
[20] In particular, her work on Janis Joplin explores how the counter culture of 'progressive rock' was dominated by men who were reactionary in their attitudes to women, and did not actually afford to women musicians new opportunities to either take control or enjoy the prestige afforded to male performers (2000: 3).
[21] Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar suggest that 'the female body has been controlled and contained, aestheticized, made small …' (2001: 145).

music—because their work focuses predominantly on non-urban styles—are the important contributions of two South African ethnomusicologists: Carol Muller who has written about 'song, dance, ritual, and dreaming amongst female followers of South African prophet Isaiah Shembe' (2008 [2004]: xi and 203-255) and Sathima Bea Benjamin (1996; 2008), and Marie Jorritsma who recently published her research on the sacred music of Graaff-Reinet's coloured community (2011). Like Allen and Ballantine's work, Muller and Jorritsma's work makes obvious the necessity to ground musical research in the South African context in a sensitive understanding of race, gender and identity.

Before apartheid's end, Mamphele Ramphele and Emile Boonzaier explained the relationship between race and gender in South Africa:

> The issue of gender does not constitute an obvious element in the political discourse in South Africa. It is commonly felt that 'race relations' form the core of the political debate and that concern about gender relations is either irrelevant or overshadowed by the more pressing problems associated with relationships between different races, ethnic groups, cultures, tribes and so on. (in Boonzaier and Sharp 1988: 153)

Shireen Hassim's authoritative book *Women's Organizations and Democracy in South Africa* (2006) explores the vexed relationship between nationalism and feminism during the apartheid years (2006: 13), and the difficulty for the women's movement in building 'autonomous organisations that retained the capacity for the self-definition of goals and strategies while nevertheless building alliances with other progressive forces' (ibid.: 19). The autonomy of women's organisations (within the anti-apartheid resistance movement) was compromised and complicated by the fact of being subservient to the authority of the male-dominated political parties to which they were bound in solidarity (ibid.).

On thinking through 'the emphasis on citizenship in post-apartheid' and the consequential 'importance of women's participation in the institutions of democracy' that Hassim articulates (ibid.), I explored recent publications on women in post-apartheid South Africa.[22] These texts informed my thinking, particularly on women's rights issues and their protection under the law. With regard to issues of sexual harassment and rape, research on Zimbabwean musicians by Angela Impey (1992) as well as by Chitauro, Dube and Gunner (2001) was influential to my understanding of the extreme gender constraints sometimes experienced by women musicians in southern Africa. In particular, I draw on the work of Carla Sutherland in my discussion of these issues in Chapter Two.

[22] In particular, work by Gouws (2005), Pillay et al (2006), Gasa (2007) and Samuelson (2007) informed my thinking, as did reading many *Agenda* journal publications.

Above, I have broadly outlined the theoretical framework that underpins the discussions in the following three chapters. I will now focus on one aspect in more detail. Arguably—certainly at the time of writing—Allen's research on black women is the most in-depth and comprehensive study in this area. Ballantine's research, however, is equally extensive and held in the highest regard.[23] Their conclusions about the same period of history—the 1950s—and musicians active during this time vary somewhat. I argue that Allen and Ballentine's differing perspectives, in dialogue, may help provide different perspectives—male and female (of the researchers and their subjects)—the 'cultural polyphony' and 'heterophony of voices' which Christine Lucia implies can only enrich and deepen our understanding of this country's music and the people who make it (2005: xxiii and xliv).

Allen explains that through their participation in professional music, South African black women musicians 'acquiesced to, and worked within, male-defined roles; reproducing gender stereotypes, even encouraging and colluding with gender oppression' (2000: 210). However, in other ways, she suggests that they also 'manipulated, circumvented, co-opted, contested and changed established rules of gender relations' (ibid.). Unlike some traditionalist feminist accounts of socially-constricted femininity that see women's role in socialisation processes as passive and determined, this allows Allen to be what Mélissa Lafrance describes as 'theoretically mindful of women's primordial active participation in the creation and renewal of dominant gender modalities' (Burns and Lafrance 2002: 229-230).

Allen explains that the black women musicians of the 1950s were 'icons of a male-conceived world; but there was agency in their iconicity in that they enhanced their own professional and personal goals by co-operating: to be publicly acknowledged as sexually powerful and financially successful was empowering' (2000: 117). Ballantine reaches a very different conclusion about the same musicians and period in South African history. He describes the 'profound masculinisation of popular music performance' by the 1950s as a 'process that put men into a position of complete dominance', one, he contends, that 'also handicapped women: it limited them to carriers of sexual frisson for men's groups, reduced

[23] 'There is no doubt that *Marabi Nights* is one of the seminal works in South African jazz history' writes Gwen Ansell; 'it is a gem of scholarship', writes Z.B. Molefe (Ballantine 2012: sleeve notes).

them to passive objects of contestation and display, and restricted them to nurturing roles' (2012: 184).

Despite the concurring history and events of the period that both Ballantine and Allen's respective research covers, the emphasis of their findings are different. The reason for this, I suggest, is not in any differing historical facts they include, but the perspectives from which they write. Allen, unmistakably influenced by a feminist theoretical framework, and having interviewed predominantly women, reaches this conclusion:

> The power and vibrancy of the 1950s women musicians as icons lies in their ability to function simultaneously as bodies and voices, mothers and sirens, objects of sexual desire and racial pride; to embody aspirant and reflective identity, the local and the international, the modern and the traditional; to inhabit the spaces between gender and race, individual and group political agency, the public and private, fantasy and reality. Women musicians functioned at the intersections of these spaces, which existed as continuums in flux rather than isolatable opposing categories. Their power and independence lies precisely in their ambiguity, multiplicity and malleability; they cannot be contained and frozen into categories by other people's projections or by analysis; they cannot be wholly known or controlled by anyone, including an academic seeking to find significance in, or 'make sense' of, their lives—earning a living, running a career, bringing up children—in between and through all these spaces. (2000: 252)[24]

Ballantine, on the other hand, concludes:

> This narrative shows that by the 1950s popular-music performance had undergone a process of profound masculinisation. This is evinced in the roles allotted to women in the production and reproduction of close-harmony performance, roles that, in comparison to the previous decades, were severely circumscribed. Women were useful for the allure of sexual frisson they could bring to a (male) group's public image and performance style, provided this sexuality was kept in check through tactics of disablement and infantilisation. They were useful for the confirmation they could bring to performers' masculine sexual identity through rituals of male contestation and female display, provided this did not carry any implication of a secure or lasting partnership. And they were useful for what they could bring to a group by way of domestic or emotional nurturing, provided this was always kept at a safe distance. (2012: 158-159)

Ballantine's assessment of gender relations during the period is reached through a method which seeks to explain why 'men in South Africa sought to control women, treating them as objects to satisfy their needs', yet 'simultaneously grieved about the damage this caused, and mourned the resulting alienation of families and intimate relationships' (2012: 146). Notably, he approaches the question of gender and music in the period from the perspective predominantly of *men* in his threefold analysis: firstly, he explains the developments within 1950s popular black urban music (through writing in the press, particularly that of Todd Matshikiza in *Drum*, and ethnographic material gained from interviews with predominantly men); secondly, he sketches a 'broad, tragic, *gendered* socio-political history' (he argues that men perceived a crisis of emasculation in the private sphere of the home, wreaked on black

[24] Allen interviewed 52 people in all, 13 of whom were men.

men and their families by the devastating system of migrant labour which took men away from their families and traditional roles within them), and thirdly, he presents 'the evidence of the music itself' (an impressively comprehensive analysis of the lyrics of the Manhattan Brothers which he places in different thematic categories) (ibid.). The categories of songs he distinguishes between (songs of migrancy and songs of mourned love) as well as his musical analysis of these songs, lead him to conclude that:

> At least at the level of aesthetic production, the (all-male) leading vocal group of the era speaks to a very different set of relationships with and concerns about women: because the songs of the Manhattan Brothers engage deeply with the social and political issues of the time, they are suffused subjectively with pain, dependency and loss. While attitudes that diminish women are not absent from the songs, the proportion these occupy is small in relation to the general concerns of this corpus, and tends to insignificance when placed against all the ways in which the songs actually value women. (ibid.: 184)

Ballantine explains that in the 1930s and 1940s, all-female groups had flourished in South Africa and women enjoyed high visibility in vaudeville groups (ibid.: 149). By the 1950s, however, there was a shift away from this positive situation and women were predominantly hired by all male vocal groups solely for their mere 'decorative' function in music (ibid.: 151). He explains that:

> The gender dynamic was evolving in ways that continued to bolster masculine power and place women ever more in the role of weak, passive victims. This manifested itself perhaps most strikingly through a dialectic: to the extent that women's musical autonomy was increasingly circumscribed, in the same measure what was increasingly 'liberated' was their availability for use as symbols of masculine prowess: women were there to be fought over, so that the male victor could then flaunt his prize as a kind of trophy. (ibid.: 152)

If women were viewed as unfit for exploitation, they were considered 'harbingers of trouble', and male groups also thought women 'possessive, interfering, unreliable, weak and hysterical' (ibid. 156 and 158). The only other role, in Ballantine's appraisal, that women were allowed into was that of the 'nurturer' of a male group, where they could be useful in domestic functions for the men, or as offering emotional support.

Despite what he describes as a general lack of autonomy for women, Ballantine does offer three instances of 'notable opposition by women themselves to this situation of generalized exploitation': Thandie Mpambani (later Klaasen) formed the Quad Sisters in 1952; Miriam Makeba formed the all female group the Skylarks in 1956, and Dorothy Masuka's recording career began at Troubadour studios in the early 1950s (ibid.:159). In contrast, Allen holds Masuka up as not only Troubadour's top singer of the 1950s but also as the single most influential artist on the development of 1950s female vocal jive, and 'arguably the most politically-orientated star of the period' (Allen 2005: 306; Allen 2000: 121). Notably she

repeatedly cites Dolly Rathebe, Dorothy Masuka and Miriam Makeba as functioning as 'icons of black aspirant and reflective identity' (ibid.: 208). She describes Dolly Rathebe, for instance, as being more than just a 'sexual fantasy icon' for township audiences, for she also 'embodied African pride and international sophistication, she connected township life with the African diaspora and defined beauty as black' (ibid.). In contrast, the chorus girls of the African Follies and Alfred Herbert's productions by the mid-1960s were 'anonymous bodies without personality' (ibid.)

Despite these minor differences, however, both writers agree that women were marginalised, exploited and operated in a male-dominated environment. The black men dominant over these women were themselves racially subjugated and lacked autonomy in an increasingly politically-oppressive climate as South Africa headed towards the period of 'high apartheid' which began in 1960. This is the lynchpin in Ballantine's argument, however, he ultimately deems women to be passive victims in this era. Allen, on the other hand, sees greater resilience and agency in their lived experiences, even though she believes their impact was contested and fractured.

This discussion is not intended to oppose these two writers in argument. Both have made extremely valuable contributions to the study of the intersections of popular music gender and race in this period in South Africa. This discussion instead foregrounds, through Ballantine and Allen's arguments, arguably the best-researched period in popular music in this country with regard to examining gender relations in the context of music. I also hope to illuminate the notion that the same set of events can be experienced and interpreted very differently through male and female perspectives, a suggestion to which I return later.

The insights gained from this discussion of gender relations of sixty years ago provides a springboard to considering what has changed (or resonates in similar ways) for men and women working together in the contemporary South African music industry. Not only has there been a change in regime and legislation in South Africa since 1994, but also the South African music industry has been experiencing rapid change. A detailed discussion of this is beyond the scope of this work, but I shall make a few brief points about the music industry to foreground the professional landscape in which my respondents work.

Before doing this, I wish also to clarify the different emphasis of the terms 'music-making' and 'music industry'. Jonathan Shaw gives a definition of the 'music industry':

> Often, the 'music industry' has been suggested to be synonymous with the 'recording industry'. However, the music industry is far larger than just the recorded music industry. The music industry would consist of the following areas, all present in the value chain below: The publishing industry, the live performance industry, the record industry, the music brand industry, the recording/production and the music broadcast industry. The basic unit of trade within all these would be the intellectual property embodied in musical songs. (2007: 20)

'Music-making' (Finnegan 1989), on the other hand emphasises the practices of creating music (alone or with others) and its performance. I largely focus on respondents' learning practices in music (formal and informal), their approaches to performing and composing, and their relationships to other people who affect these practices. However, there is always awareness that these aspects of music-making—of musical enterprise— form one part of a greater whole. This study is not a thorough sociology of the workplace in music. Congruently, discussion of the music industry and on music within this as product—only one part, 'the basic unit of trade' in the 'value chain' of the music business that Shaw defines—raise the complicated issue of commerce versus art.[25] I focus instead on how a certain group of women musicians make meaning in and of their social and musical practices. That they do so within the framework of making a living, is never far from the surface of their consciousness.

The South African music industry

By the 1990s, several multinational corporations dominated the ownership in the global industry, including South Africa. The trans-national record majors treated South Africa as a marginal market, and South Africa—like many other centres outside of Britain and America—faced issues of asserting local needs in the face of the industry globalisation, and the accompanying issue of cultural imperialism.[26] The 'world music' category had grown in popularity by the beginning of the decade, particularly after the success of Paul Simon's controversial album *Graceland*, and, as a result, seemed to promise hope for South African

[25] Scholars in British Cultural Studies such as Middleton (1990) and Frith (1996) have written extensively on this issue, particularly within the context of debates concerning the merits of 'high' and 'low' culture.
[26] The issues of local versus global interests, cultural imperialism and strategies of protecting local interests are discussed at length in the work of Wallis and Malm (1984), Burnett (1996), Taylor (1997), and Gebesmair (2001).

artists to make inroads into foreign markets.[27] Although there is a profusion of South African popular music styles, they are ghettoized. By this, I mean that they are delineated along racial and ethnic lines, just as they were during apartheid when the recording industry and the SABC produced and disseminated popular music along strictly ethnically-delineated lines (Allen 2005: 84-5; Allingham 1994b: 377 and 387). In post-apartheid South Africa, the concepts of ethnicity, multiculturalism and authenticity that have haunted South African pop historically continue to be debated. Syncretic and hybridised in all its forms—the product of acculturation—South African popular music has long been torn between the attraction to global music styles (marked dominantly by the cultural affiliation of black urbanised South Africans with Afro-American styles) and the reclamation of real and imagined musical 'roots' (Ashcroft et al, 1989: 36), evident in the debates about cross-over styles that so marked the 1980s and early 1990s.

Nearly two decades later, the 'world music' category has achieved less commercial success for South African artists than was hoped: the sales of local recorded music make little impression in the global market (Ansell et al 2007: 40). However, the sales of local music in the South African market are remarkably higher than in other countries (ibid.: 39). The reason for this is that South Africa is still catching up to the full impact of technological change in how music is distributed, which is causing dramatic change to the nature of the global music industry. The impact of digital downloading is responsible for the current waning power of the global majors in the face of the challenge brought by digital technology (ibid.).

Trade bodies such as The Recording Industry of South Africa (RISA) and The Association of Independent Record Companies (AIRCO) are negotiating issues of digital inclusion into their business models. However, the main challenges the local music industry currently faces are piracy and debates around whether the current quotas for airplay for local broadcast legislated are high enough to boost the local industry and needletime (how much play local content gets on radio and television) (Moshito Report 2010: 3). Startling in the South African music industry is the predominance of recorded music over live performance. The circuit for live performers (excluding incoming international acts and theatres) is limited and 'spatially bound' (ibid.: 20):

[27] As a point of illustration, the *Billboard* World Music Charts, listed from May 1990 until August 1996, featured seven South African artists repeatedly (Taylor 1997: 209-223).

> … we have two parallel, and gradually overlapping live music circuits when measured by audience: one mainly black and one mainly white. Performers circuit and transcend these barriers, but the audiences are seldom able to. Both economic and social development prerogatives prompt us to flag this very real legacy of apartheid. (ibid.)

Another challenge to live performance is the seasonality of available opportunities and events (Ansell et al 2007: 69-85) and the lack of consistent, appropriate venues (Albert 1994: 45; Ansell 2004 261-302; Moshito Report 2010: 16). Without adequate venues and performance opportunities, the 'heirachy of professionalism' whereby amateur and less-accomplished musicians gain experience and gradually progress to semi-professional and then professional status is compromised (Ansell et al 2007: 53-54). Also debated is the role the state can play in boosting this sector of industry. The Department of Arts and Culture has invested huge funds in the last decade on the upgrading of the Newtown Cultural Precinct and purchase of Downtown Studios (in downtown Johannesburg). Criticism of these strategies of support include: firstly, the widely spread physical locale of actual practitioners in the music industry is not concentrated in Newtown or downtown Johannesburg, and secondly, funds could be better used to strengthen industry networks of professionals and facilitate training (rather than being spent on infrastructure) ('Working Big, Acting Small' presentation 2011: n.p.). Lastly, there are various music awards which do add significantly to a recorded artist's reputation and profile, in particular the South African Music Awards (SAMAs). However, there is consternation as to their real value and objectivity. Gwen Ansell openly said: 'I think our current awards are increasingly becoming so discredited that they are having less and less importance. They are a very short-lived marketing tool around the time when they are awarded' (Int. 2007).

This brief and broad overview hopefully gives some insight into the industry in which the musicians I interviewed operate. The general consensus, gained from my interviews, is that gigs for live original music, particularly jazz, are scarce: one of the most lucrative circuits of live performance is private 'corporate' events or functions which hire musicians to provide live entertainment (referred to often as 'corporates' in the interview data). Music genres and audiences are delineated along predominantly racial lines (for instance rock is white, and *kwaito* is black), and one of the best markets to secure a supportive public as an artist is 'Afrikaans' (Neethling Int. 2006; Ribeiro Int. 2006).[28] Historically, there was an exploitative relationship between musicians and recording companies that developed in the twentieth

[28] 'Afrikaans' music here refers to popular music with Afrikaans lyrics.

century.[29] The actual changes in this relation—real as well as perceived by musicians—is beyond the scope of this report, but certainly it is an under-researched area worth future investigation.

Women in South African music performance

I make two observations about women working professionally in South African music-making that permeate the following discussions, which I wish to substantiate here. Firstly, I observe that there are far more female vocalists than instrumentalists working professionally. Secondly, with regard to instrumentalists, there are far fewer black women than white women playing instruments. With regard to the first observation, that women are in the minority as instrumentalists in all genres of popular music is witnessed by the views of the majority of my respondents, my own participant-observation within music-making in Johannesburg, and observation while attending public concerts.

A concrete example of the small numbers of young women playing instruments, however, comes from the annual National Youth Jazz Festival (NJYF) in Grahamstown. The average of statistics collated of participants in the Festival from 2004 to 2012 record the average female/male participation as 34%/66%, and average non-white/white participation as 60%/40%.[30] These statistics are not representative of women playing professionally, however they do show a marked increase in female participation in jazz (one area of popular music making) in comparison with the situation in the first half of the twentieth century that Placksin (1982) and Dahl (1884) document in the US or Allen (2000) in South Africa. Nonetheless they clearly reflect female participation in music-making is in the minority. Alan Webster (NYJF Director) confirmed the idea that there is a 'female drop-out rate': 'The number of females at university declines substantially, but even more dramatically in the professional arena. My thumb-suck for female numbers is 40% of total students playing jazz at school; 20% at university; 5% professional' (Webster 2013, pers. com.).

[29] Anderson (1981), Erlmann (1991), Allen (2000:119-154), Coplan (2007) and Ballantine (2012) document the exploitation of musicians by the recording companies. For the most highly publicised case of exploitation of a South African, see Gwen Ansell's description of the case of Solomon Linda and Gallo (2004: 50), and Riaan Malan's account on 3rd Ear Music (.

[30] These figures conflate participants who are playing instruments at school with those studying music at tertiary level, which as Festival Director Alan Webster pointed out to me can be a little misleading. Nonetheless, they are the only statistics in this area I was able to obtain and do provide insight into the increasingly numbers of young women playing instruments.

To highlight my second observation, the paucity of black female instrumentalists, I now list —as comprehensively as possible—the black female instrumentalists (working in popular music, jazz *and* classical music) that I know of, based on my own network of contacts gained as a musician and music educator, on my formal interviews recorded for this dissertation as well as other informal interviews with music colleagues. Perhaps most convincingly, South Africa's Music Industry Directory, The Score, lists 250 artists in its 2006-2007 publication, with only one female instrumentalist's inclusion: Tu Nokwe (again one must note she accompanies her own singing, rather than performs solely as an instrumentalist), and The Score's current website lists seven hundred and forty seven artists (solo artists and bands) but none of the below-mentioned women come up on their website when searched (Accessed 10 January 2013). [31]

In Johannesburg, Ndithini Mbali is the only black female instrumentalist listed on entertainment agency 5seasons's website (the agency which has the most comprehensive on-line list of artists). Rising to prominence is saxophonist Nthabiseng Mokoena, since she performed in 'Sax Summit' at the 2012 Joy of Jazz Festival. The Music Academy of Gauteng's website (Accessed 10 January 2013) lists Mokoena alongside other female alumni Mpho Mabogiane (trombone) and Zodwa Zililo (saxophone) as working professionally in Johannesburg. Trombonist Siya Makuzeni is the most high profile black female instrumentalist, although also a well-regarded singer and increasingly working more as a vocalist rather than trombonist. Kgaogelo Mailula is the only female trumpeter in Gauteng whose existence I know of. Tu Nokwe plays guitar but, like Siya, is predominantly recognised as a vocalist. All-female band Basadi includes five black female instrumentalists: Mabatho Masopha (flute), Dineo Masopha (percussion), Phuti Sepuru (piano) and Sibongile Gwacela (bass); while Anikki Maswanganye (drums), Zodwa Mabene (bass), Lesego Nkonyane (saxophone), Louisa Lolo Chipane (piano) and Thope Diniso (guitar) have recorded as Ladies in Jazz (2006) and performed as The Art Ensemble Women in Jazz. While featured as a solo artist on festival performances and in the press after her 1999 CD release *La Mogale*, Kgaogelo Mailula (trumpet) is currently working as a music educator. Similarly, Lipalesa Lebabo (bass guitar) has battled to establish her performing career

[31] According to their website, The Performers' Organisation of South Africa Trust (POSA) represents more than seven thousand recording artists, and was established to administer 'Needletime Rights on behalf of recording artists/musicians who have assigned their Needletime Rights to SAMRO' (South African Musicians' Rights Organisation) (POSA n.d., n.p.). A statistical breakdown of the gender and genres of these performers was not available to the author at the time of writing.

outside of theatre performances. To my knowledge, there are no female black instrumentalists currently performing in pop or rock bands based in Gauteng with the one exception of Reabetswe (Ruby) Ngoasheng. Violist for the electric string quartet, The Muses, Ngoasheng is the first black female instrumentalist (to my knowledge) to have performed on a Barnyard Theatre stage (an established circuit for musicians focussed on rock or pop-based covers' shows). No female black instrumentalist performs regularly as a session player for studio work or live performance other than Siya Makuzeni. There are a few prominent black female musicians working professionally within classical music in Gauteng, but who do not perform popular music or jazz: Regomoditswe Thothela (double bass), Khanyisile Mthetwa (flute), Olga Maraba (violin) and Kgothatso Kekane (bassoon). Notably all are fairly young, which reveals that the local classical music scene is becoming more racially inclusive, even if still dominantly white (and a territory populated by many players born and musically educated in other countries). Ilke Lea Alexander who is coloured (to employ the historically-constructed racial category still currently in use in South Africa), is a young classically trained flautist who has performed extensively in classical music and as a session player for various projects and performances in popular music. In 2012 she was a member of Carlo Mombelli's jazz band the Prisoners of Strange.

South African legislation on the rights of women

Post-1994 labour legislation provides a significantly improved protection for women in the workplace. The Labour Relations Act 66 of 1995 ('the LRA') provides the blueprint for individual and collective employer-employee relations. Inherent in this relationship is that the musician must be defined as an 'employee' in order to be protected by the LRA – a definition which specifically excludes independent contractors.

Arguably the two most important innovations introduced by the LRA in the context of sexual harassment, is the introduction of constructive dismissal and the Code of Good Practice on the Handling of Sexual Harassment Cases.[32] The concept of constructive dismissal allows an employee to claim that they were unfairly dismissed, and to seek compensation in the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration ('the CCMA') and Labour Courts where 'an employee terminated a contract of employment with or without

[32] This is published under General Notice 1367 in Government Gazette 19049 of 17 July 1998.

notice because the employer made continued employment intolerable for the employee.'[33] This means that where a female musician is harassed, and the employer or management refuses to assist her, she can resign and claim that she has been unfairly dismissed.[34] The Code of Good Practice on the Handling of Sexual Harassment Cases provides a set of guidelines for employers to ensure that workplaces are free of sexual harassment, and that when sexual harassment occurs, it is properly dealt with.

With regard to childbirth (an issue which arises in the discussion in Chapter Two), The Basic Conditions of Employment Act 75 of 1997 ('the BCEA') further protects women employee musicians by providing for minimum conditions of employment, including maternity leave.

Finally, the Employment Equity Act 55 of 1998 ('the EEA') is aimed at eliminating discrimination in the workplace, including against women. More generally, the Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act 4 of 2000 ('the Equality Act'), prohibits any form of discrimination, including harassment on the basis of gender, and provides remedies through the Equality Court. The Equality Act applies to all persons, and not only those in an employment relationship.

The above outline of the protection of women's rights in law is valuable in understanding certain areas of the discussions that follow, and I return to it in my Conclusion. I now proceed with presenting and discussing what women say, think and feel about their experiences in music-making, with particular focus on how their gender plays (or does not play) a part. I juxtapose their comments with my own interpretations, and also draw on several examples of the ways in which women musicians are represented in discourse. It is out of the 'historical and intellectual tangle' described in this chapter, that my narrative begins (Baur et al 2008: n.p.).[35]

[33] This is quoted from Section 186(1)(e) of the LRA.
[34] In practice, however, it is fairly difficult to prove a constructive dismissal.
[35] Used in another context, this phrase comes from Rose Rosengard Subotnik's 'Tribute to Susan McClary' before the book begins.

CHAPTER TWO
FORMATIVE EXPERIENCES, RELATIONSHIPS AND POWER TENSIONS

'Being a young woman on stage wasn't easy. The stage and late-night performances in clubs and dance halls were always associated with prostitution or something bad. Good families would not allow their children to become performers! It wasn't proper for women to be on stage. That is why we all looked up to Dolly Rathebe. Dolly didn't give a damn.'
—MIRIAM MAKEBA (2004: 28)

'So many people have been good and bad, all influential on my craft and the person I have become.'
—NKOTO MALEBYE (Int. 2007)

'So women in music, it's also other things, it's not just performance, and I think there are stories we are not writing. There are invisibilities, there are erasures, there are exclusions.'
—GWEN ANSELL (Int. 2007)

Introduction

Lara Allen's introduction to Z.B. Molefe and Mike Mzileni's book, *A Common Hunger to Sing*, highlights some of the challenges black South African women had to overcome in their musical careers, spanning the period from the 1930s to 1990:

> Resistance to their playing instruments was not the only problem women musicians had to contend with. Other difficulties reverberate thematically throughout the following testimonies. Stage women have, for instance, long had to battle against the social attitudes which categorize them as loose or wild. Many singers therefore experienced strong resistance from their parents and families, who wanted them to take up more respectable, reliable professions, such as teaching or nursing. The problem that caused the most heartache, however, was the conflict of interests that so often arose between trying to balance the "traditional role" of a "good wife" with a stage career. The lucky few who managed to be successful wives and singers generally had understanding, supportive husbands who helped raise the children and were not fearful or jealous of their wives' fame and exposure. Most singers, however, had to choose. Some gave up the stage, others lost their husbands. Then of course there were the problems shared by both male and female musicians. Everyone suffered economic exploitation at the hands of promoters and record companies. But most destructive of all was the way in which apartheid legislation (such as the Separate Amenities Act, the Group Areas Act, the liquor laws and the pass laws) had such a deep negative impact on the personal and professional lives of all black artists. (In Molefe and Mzileni 1997: n.p.)

Allen lists major issues from her research in the quotation above. Will the experience of the women musicians I have interviewed be similar or different from the pioneering women in South African popular music and jazz of whom Allen was writing? I begin with a discussion

of parental and family attitudes to the early music–making and aspirations of women musicians now living in post-apartheid South Africa.

As an initial point of comparison, I preface the experiences of my respondents with two examples from the 1940s and 1950s to highlight the early opposition women met at that time. When Anneline Malebu's mother heard of her decision to become a singer, 'she took her to the local police station where she wanted the police to knock some sense into her' (ibid.). The matter ended up in Children's Court where her mother was told to give her a chance. After eventually persuading her mother otherwise, Malebu went on to a successful professional career in music that included being a member of the much-loved South African group, Joy.[36] Similarly, Thoko Thomo, 'a sizzling star at the pinnacle of her career in the fifties' (ibid.) and one of Gallo's top women vocalists (Allen 2000: 137), articulates parental resistance to professional musical aspirations in the 1940s and 1950s:

> My parents flatly refused to let me join his group [Matome Ramogopa's the Lo Six].[37] Their argument was that a singing career would take me out of church. Another reason was that they, like most parents at the time, took a dim view of women singers. They told him [Ramogopa] that a music career would corrupt me and that I would be naughty. (Molefe and Mzileni 1997: n.p.)

Yet Ramogopa was persistent and eventually persuaded Thomo's parents to acquiesce to her musical ambitions. Later, when auditions were held for the musical *King Kong* in 1959, which furthered the careers of singers such as Miriam Makeba, Peggy Phango, Abigail Kubeka, Mary Rabotapi and Sophie Mgcina, family commitments at the time prevented Thomo from participating (ibid.). Although she did continue to freelance as a solo singer, 'Thoko Thomo is convinced that she could have achieved much as a musician, but marriage and its commitments have prevented her from spending more time on her first love: her music' (ibid.).

The question is: do women working in music professionally in contemporary South Africa look back on extreme resistance, such as Malebu overcame, to their decisions to pursue music as a career? Do they, like Thomo, regret career paths not taken that they would have wished to pursue? Or have these sorts of challenges receded for women musicians living in a post-apartheid South Africa? I present here the formative experiences, influences, attitudes and relationships that have affected the early and later musical experiences of the women I

[36] Joy are best known for their hit single 'Paradise Road' which spent nine weeks at Number One on the South African charts in 1980 (Liner notes, Joy 1994).
[37] The male vocal group Lo Six were 'one of the leading singing outfits' of the 1950s. Prominent writer, musician and *Drum* journalist Todd Matshikiza described Thomo as 'the girl who put the tick into Lo Six' (Ballantine 2012: 150).

interviewed, along with some supporting perspectives from the documented history on and perspectives of the black urban South African women musicians of the 1950s. I argue that many tensions for women entering musical careers have eased: women are not as impeded in their career choices as sixty years ago, and career paths for women in music are both more varied and possible as a result of better access to education. However, there are still areas of tension and difficulty for women's music-making, as the following discussion will reveal.

Early influences and family attitudes affecting women's choice of a musical career

The following reports from the women I interviewed show how families gave much positive and nurturing support during early developmental years. Kate O'Hanlan's parents sent her to a specialist music school, Chetham's School of Music, as they lived in England during that period (Int. 2007). Elena Zlatkova (Int. 2006), said her mother 'had the ambition' for her to become a musician and chose the violin for her when she was four years old. She attended the conservatory in Sophia, Bulgaria, for twelve years as a child. While Zlatkova recognised her mother's encouragement and enthusiasm for her violin playing, she also said: 'Now I can look back and say a lot of pressure was put on me to be perfect' (Int. 2006).

For a few women, having a musical family was remembered as being of seminal importance. Nkoto Malebye (Int. 2007) fondly remembers her grandmother's choir rehearsing at the family home, and learning to harmonise as her grandmother sang. 'I've always been performing, even from a young age, up on the table in the kitchen performing for my grandmother!' She also spoke of her mother and grandmother's support through her undergraduate degree and the fact that they travelled from Mpumalanga to watch her student performances. Pianist Melody van der Merwe (Int. 2006), was inspired to play by her amateur saxophonist father whom she described as 'very talented, but not an educated musician', who 'pushed his daughters so we wouldn't end up like him.' Kerry Hiles (Int. 2007) described attending folk clubs in her youth in the mining communities she lived in while in the Free State and Botswana. She remembers an early desire to become a musician or an actress, fueled by this environment and by her guitar-playing mother and 'my dad dressed up in drag!' Ayanda Nokwe (Int. 2006) says of her mother and aunt, singers Marilyn and Tu Nokwe: '… they said I didn't have such a nice voice – they had to work with it!' Ayanda's jesting tone of voice revealed amusement at her family's honesty, but also a

gratitude for their patience and the invaluable lessons learnt from their musicianship and experience. Tu Nokwe in turn, acknowledged the seminal influence of their mother, singer Patty Nokwe, and wrote *Singing The Times*, a musical dramatisation of her mother's life story (Int. 2006).[38]

Ndithini Mbali also came from a musical family: her grandfather, 'Sax-O-Wills',[39] was a saxophonist and her brother, Sliq Angel, is a professional singer-songwriter. She recalled how her grandfather inspired her to want to learn music and play in a band, and later taught her the saxophone. Women from musical families such as these spoke of their positive influence, while other women, such as Franka Insinger and Pam Mortimer, acknowledged simply that their families had loved music and that their own musical tastes developed in a nurturing environment. A number of women, including Connie Bentlage, also acknowledged their parents' influential role in sustaining their musical efforts during times they enjoyed music less or wanted to stop. Bentlage explained: 'I wanted to give up, and my mother just said: "over my dead body"' and immediately qualified this to me by saying: 'My mother was a huge influence in my life, and an icon. She was an amazing woman' (Int. 2006). Many women spoke of their family, not only in youth, as a source of support and encouragement in their musical careers.

Alternatively, several women implied some tension in their musical background from their family or other circumstances. Bronwen Clacherty said: 'When I was about twelve I hated my piano lessons so much I used to cry before every single one, and my father forced me to go on. And I'm so glad that he did. Then I changed teachers to a wonderful woman' (Int. 2007). Ziza Mhlongo (2010)[40] made the unusual observation that her mother had supported her early music making to 'get her off the streets'. While growing up in Zagreb, Croatia, she attended a specialist music school every afternoon. Kgaogelo Mailula (Int. 1, 2010) has similar memories: her father forbade her and her siblings from playing on the Soweto streets. 'We were called white people in the black township because my father was strict.' Yet she describes her father thus: 'My father just loved music for us, and he was a good person.' He

[38] *Singing The Times* was staged at the Market Theatre in 1992 and 1993. It was performed by Tu, Marilyn and Patty Nokwe and directed by Barney Simon (Int. 2006; Allen 2000).
[39] Gwen Ansell records that William 'Sax-O-Wills' Mbali was bandleader of the Blue Rhythm Syncopators in Queenstown circa 1940 (2004: 45).
[40] Ziza Mhlongo's full forename is Zinaida. However, I refer to her always by her performance name: Ziza.

encouraged their early music education with instrumental and theory lessons at Dorkay House[41], and their participation in a brass band formed in Soweto by Isaac Dlamini.

Other women described their parents as supportive yet pushy, and not always a positive influence. Celeste Ribeiro started to sing on stage when she was only five years old, encouraged by her father. She explained that while young:

> My father used to push me, and try and make contacts for me. I never really wanted to be a star. I just really wanted to perform. But I think my father really wanted me to be a star, and I don't think he ever got that about me, that it wasn't about being a celebrity for me or being nice to people I didn't like. For him he wanted me to be nice to everybody, and that wasn't part of my nature. And I just plodded along. I think that I got to wherever I got just by my singing abilities. (Int. 2006)

Susan Cock's mother insisted she pursue music as a career, and said that this imposition on her clearly left its psychological mark: 'It's one of the reasons I say to kids [referring to her students]: "if you have anything else you can do, do it"… I think I would have had a more balanced life.' She explained:

> She had a huge belief in my talent, much more than I did! … And I don't know how much of it was she wished she had my talent, and was going to make jolly sure I made the most of it, or if that was just in her nature: you do the best you can, and you're not doing the best you can unless you go into music. But there was absolutely no question that when I left school I was going to go to UCT and do a BMus. (Int. 2006)[42]

For a few of my interviewees there was a problem that arose because of a distinctive choice of instrument and how this affected relationships and attitudes. Franka Insinger (Int. 2006) spent a small inheritance from her grandmother on the purchase of her first alto saxophone in her early twenties. Abbey Artico (Int. 2006) was sixteen and playing the recorder when she first heard the saxophone: '…literally the next day [I] went and got myself a waitressing job and about a month later bought myself my first sax … it cost me R999! It wasn't even from a music shop it was from a junk store; it was a terrible, terrible sax! But from the moment I

[41] Situated on Eloff Street in central Johannesburg, Dorkay House was acquired by Union Artists (Union of South African Artists) from funds raised at Trevor Huddleston's farewell concert in 1954 (Ansell 2004: 97). Dorkay House became an administrative centre for Union Artists, and training venue for young musicians. It also became a venue for festivals, talent contests and the Township Jazz and Dorkay Jazz concert series in the late 1950s (ibid.). David Coplan writes that 'these concerts allowed musicians to perform in secure, well-organised circumstances, without significant artistic interference from whites ... Though audiences were segregated, the series did gain African jazz musicians a wider multi-racial following and greatly revived interest in jazz within the Johannesburg black community' (2008: 213-4). In 2004, Gwen Ansell wrote: 'Dorkay House still survives, although today it is crippled by lack of funding' (2004: 97).

[42] Susan Cock is primarily a classical musician, pianist, organist and both orchestral and choir conductor as well as educator and arranger. In her early career, she also worked as a producer at the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC). I included her in my sample, however, because in the months preceding our interview in 2006 she conducted several popular music concerts around the country, including one at the Market Theatre that featured Thandiswa Mazwai. At the time of our interview, Cock was Head of Music at an independent girls' secondary school and was teaching and arranging popular music, amongst other genres. For the purposes of this study, I only excluded interviewing musicians who worked *exclusively* in classical music.

knew of the instrument, I thought: "that's what I'm going to do for my life". ' Others chose their instrument somewhat by chance. Kerry Hiles (Int. 2006), for instance, played the guitar when her family moved to East London and advertised in a music shop that she wanted to play in a band. A drummer who was teaching his son and looking for youngsters for him to play with auditioned her and decided she had good rhythm, so suggested she learn the bass guitar. 'I didn't even know what a bass guitar was, but I said yes!'

Another theme arose regarding instruments that were given up or never played: Melody van der Merwe, for instance, stopped playing the drums because she felt embarrassed by 'peer pressure' (Int. 2006). Generally, however, the women I interviewed had been encouraged to make music and had musical opportunities as youngsters, whether of a formal or informal nature. A select few of them, Ziza Mhlongo, Kate O'Hanlan, Elena Zlatkova and Kgaogelo Mailula, attended specialist music schools or centres in their youth. Notably, only Mailula had musical instruction of this sort in South Africa. All the women I interviewed, however, spoke of having had one-on-one instrumental lessons with a teacher, including the vocalists. However, despite their positive backgrounds, there is no obvious correlation between early support for their music-making and their musical skill or success now. Significantly, too, no women spoke of receiving formal improvisation or jazz lessons as youngsters.

This discussion now moves on from early experiences to issues that concern my interviewees in their careers as adults and, therefore, to more general issues that emerge out of their experience as career musicians. Despite the positives recorded above, the attitude does still exist in society that a *career* in the creative arts is a risky one. For instance when I spoke to Ndithini Mbali (Int. 2006) about the issues of support, although she described her family as 'too supportive',[43] she added that not all in her community view music as a very sensible career choice:

> Other families—some people close to us—would say: 'no, you need to find a job instead of doing this music thing, because it won't take you anywhere!' There are some who don't encourage you at all, but some family members do encourage you and they say: 'go for it, we'll support you all the way', while others will say: 'this music thing, it will take twenty years for you to get out there and to be who you want to be.' It takes a long time, but you just have to be patient. I think that's the reason why we don't see many black women playing. (ibid.)

Kristel Birkholtz describes this attitude as the 'notion' or 'myth' of a starving artist' and her argument then continues towards this myth's deconstruction (2010: 135). She cites a study by Filer which concludes that artists (a term used to denote actors, dancers and musicians)

[43] Used in this context, 'too' is a South African colloquialism that instead means 'very' or 'extremely'.

do not earn less than other professionals with similar training and personal characteristics. Furthermore, he described artists as 'normal, risk-averse, income-seeking individuals as many other professional workers might be' (Filer 1986: 74). Birkholtz observes that this 'myth of the starving artist', was evident in the interviews she conducted with musicians, many of whom 'reflected that their parents and or teachers had passed on the impression that musicians did not make money' (2010: 135).[44] Similarly, some comments from my respondents may confirm the lingering stereotype that music is not a sensible career choice. Birkholtz concludes that there is growing awareness that the music industry in South Africa can and does support sustainable careers (Birkholtz 2010: 30; Shaw 2007: 20-21). What she does not consider, however, is the possible attrition rate of people from musical to other careers which may be higher in music than in the other professions she refers to.

Nonetheless, Birkholtz's conclusion that perceptions about the feasibility of music as a career are changing was not reflected in my respondents' views. Unlike the predominantly negative stories of family opposition in their early careers told by the female vocalists that Z.B. Molefe interviewed (1997), many parents of my interviewees did not express reservations about a daughter entering the music industry. Vicky Goddard, for instance, explained: 'My parents have always been very supportive. I think … they realize there aren't many female sax players around, and they see that I enjoy myself … [They have] always been encouraging' (Int. 2006). Vicky described how they in fact supported and encouraged her endeavours, 'especially when I changed careers from Food Technology to Music.' Similarly, Cathy del Mei's parents supported her choice of music:

> My mother has been amazing. She still makes my costumes and dresses and my parents have been very supportive of my career. My dad supported Astrid [one of Cathy's elder sisters] going for her ballet and there's more scope for a musician than a ballerina! They supported us all and always wanted to come and see the shows. (ibid.)

Celeste Ribeiro described her father as having in fact 'orchestrated' her early singing career: 'I think sometimes my dad probably pushed me a little too much … then again if it weren't for him, I probably might have given it up and done something else' (Int. 2006). Claire Johnston had only happy memories of her parents' support. Claire recalled her mother's moral and practical support as she sought the professional stage, first at the age of ten in a production of *Annie*, and as a seventeen-year-old auditioning for Mango Groove with whom

[44] Birkholtz aims to show that many musicians active in South Africa might not have adequate training or knowledge in aspects of the music industry crucial to their craft, and consequently may be ill equipped to 'improve their working conditions and grow the local music industry' (2010: 134).

she achieved fame as lead singer in the 1980s. So despite the negative 'myth' attached to creative arts careers for women, the *entré* to such careers in South Africa today would seem to be more open.

A further issue concerns the paucity of black female instrumentalists working in popular music and jazz in South Africa. Throughout the past century in South Africa, musical performance has been an arena bounded by firmly entrenched gender roles: women sing, men play instruments (Allen in Molefe and Mzileni 1997: n.p.; Allen 2000: 155). While there have, however, been some notable exceptions as discussed in Chapter One, playing the piano or teaching music was traditionally accepted for a woman, while playing traditionally masculine instruments (such as the trumpet, saxophone, guitar or drums) was considered a novelty, freakish or at worst, sexually abhorrent (Allen in Molefe and Mzileni 1997: n.p.; Allen 2000: 155-160). There are, however, increasing numbers of young women, black women included, playing instruments at school level and enrolled in university music departments in South Africa. With regard to women playing professionally, however, the view held by most women I interviewed is that women instrumentalists in popular music and jazz are a small minority, and that most of these women are white. Saxophonist Abbey Artico commented:

> I don't think there are many [female instrumentalists] out there, to be very honest. And I think the sad thing – especially for black women – is that … just within their own culture they are marginalised. Women are supposed to be at home, or breeding or whatever. And really I wish that someone could start a government-aided … black women's music school, and just help some women get out there to play, because there are very few out there. (Int. 2006)

While black female instrumentalists working professionally are not common in Gauteng, trombonist Siya Makuzeni believes there are young black women who want to play instruments. She suggests the primary reason that they do not is lack of opportunity and resources in their education, specifically lack of access to teachers and instruments (Int. 2006; Int. 2010). She pinpointed a further two ideas as seminal in dissuading women from musical careers: firstly, that music is not seen as a lucrative or stable profession and second, that the 'old notion' still persists that pop and jazz music environments can be seedy and 'inappropriate for ladies' (Int. 2010):

> Just the notion that you are meant to be a mother and stay home, and know your place, and that kind of thing. Music is also not seen as a profession. The combination of those two things makes it hard. I mean if you want to pursue it, you need to fight hard against those things all the time. Yes, definitely. Also there are so many connotations of being a musician, and it is a very different world. You work by night most of the time, and you're hardly ever home, and you're around alcohol and drugs and so definitely being a musician, it's seen as the last resort, and why would you want to do that? She's such a nice girl and she's ruining herself so much! Even my Mum talks like that, so I know. (ibid.)

The phrase 'you are meant to be a mother and stay home' so clearly reveals the perception that patriarchy is still a factor in dissuading women from certain types of music-making. I raised the same idea while interviewing Susan Cock who had a different response: 'I don't necessarily think that is a music-related thing. There are careers like engineering—that is a tough environment—when women are actually very capable of doing that. I don't think it's necessarily about music' (Int. 2006).

Cock raises a valid point: women battle against stereotypes about their career choices and capabilities in fields other than music. While Makuzeni's parents were encouraging of her music making as a child, they are concerned about her financial security, despite being proud of her achievements and respecting her decision to pursue her passion:

> I would say it's very difficult because I think sometimes they want to say: surely you should be doing something else, but then they do respect where I am and my decisions. But it's not easy for them. Because they don't come from a world where they went to recitals. It's a brand new world they are trying to understand, and I think they still are trying to get to the point where they ask: how then do you get to be successful? I have to have these really long debates with them. And sometimes it's just about explaining to them about publishing and licensing and that there is a world beyond just performing and selling CDs. (Int. 2010)

The women in Nkoto Malebye's family encouraged her choice of drama and music (she studied musical theatre), but her father was initially reticent. He asked her: 'What are you going to do? This is a hobby; you should treat this as a hobby', and 'you're a woman … it's easier for you to look pretty and to get a good husband.' Nkoto said: 'I didn't want that. I want to be able to afford my own things, which I'm doing now. I want to be able to make that difference, and to know that I don't need to look pretty and to get a good husband so I can be secure. I can be secure on my own money and make that difference wherever I can, you know' (Int. 2007). No longer living with her father after her parents' divorce, it seems Nkoto was buffered enough by the supportive women in her family.

Not being supported into a musical career was not unique to black women. Laurie Levine's[45] parents, for instance, disapproved of her ambitions of a musical career:

> There's been a resistance from my parents … 'Well you can't make a career of this', but I'm going to ... I can and I am, even though financially it's not [lucrative]… and that is why I have another job. I

[45] Three respondents studied drama formally, rather than music: Kerry Hiles, Laurie Levine and Franka Insinger, while Nkoto Malebye studied Musical Theatre. I asked Laurie if her parents had similar concerns over her stability in a dramatic career, but she responded: 'No, I think there are quite a lot of fields within drama, and a bit more scope, there's acting, directing, teaching, productions, so I don't think they were too concerned with that' (Int. 2006).

> think they are skeptical but they are becoming more encouraging than they used to be, especially as they see the work grow, and the quality of the work. (Int. 2007)

Two women spoke of resistance not to music as a career, but instead to their choice of non-classical music. On beginning her Masters after completing an Honours in Chamber Music, musical director and pianist Janine Neethling amusingly said that her piano tutor at the University of Cape Town, Albie van Schalkwyk, told her: 'I was dragging a wooden leg with me and I should set myself free!' He was encouraging, however: 'He was great: he used to come and support my shows and if I was travelling, he would teach me up in Joburg. He was really fantastic' (Int. 2006). Neethling's father, on the other hand, was so disappointed at her decision to quit her Masters that he did not speak to her for three months (ibid.). Connie Bentlage enjoyed studying classical piano at the University of the Witwatersrand, but never felt passionate about it. She does not regret her parents having suggested she get a classical grounding, but remembers the battles she had with her piano tutor at Wits who disapproved of her 'light music' practising (ibid.).

Further important relationships: support and lack of support for women's careers

The women interviewed also talked about other seminal relationships: with partners or husbands, with other musicians, colleagues and peers, and with others in the music industry. Many women spoke of positive relationships in which they felt encouraged and appreciated as youngsters pursuing music and also of later friendships that bolstered their self-esteem and encouraged their music making. However, many also spoke of less positive relationships and, indeed, of some situations they regarded as misjudged or intrusive. For instance, Bronwen Clacherty felt offended by a friend's practical but unexpectedly stereotyped comment; she reported:

> There's only been one person who made me angry, and made me feel that I had to defend myself. He's a musician himself, but he's studying law. He said to me: 'how're you going to make money? How are you going to support a family?' And it's something I don't have an answer to. I don't know. I love music! It's what I do… I have that dedication. Mostly my friends just think it's strange, but they are supportive. (Int. 2007)

Learning musical skills from colleagues was a common experience for many women I spoke to, and I give further examples in a discussion of informal musical learning practices in Chapter Four. Nevertheless, another common experience for my respondents was sometimes

feeling belittled or intimidated by other musicians, particularly men. Pam Mortimer spoke of a male jazz pianist, arranger and composer she much admires:

> He's one of the most fantastic musicians I've ever played with. He plays piano like…he can change styles…in the middle of the solo he can start playing stride, or Thelonius Monk stuff…he's brilliant! And you know he can orchestrate for an orchestra, he can arrange for an orchestra, for big band. He writes music – you want to hear the stuff he's written … brilliant, his concepts! *But*, the most difficult, demanding person in the world…he absolutely made me nervous. He scared the hell out of me. (Int. 2006)

Like Mortimer, Melody van der Merwe described learning about jazz from her male musical colleagues, but experiencing an undercurrent of tension. She explains:

> I get a bit flustered when guys that I'm playing with tell me to play a flat 13th and then go to this sharp, because I'm not trained to hear it and just do it. I don't know if they do it just to see that I can't do what they've asked. [She laughs.] I get that feeling! (Int. 2006)

I pressed her on this matter a little, and our conversation developed like this:

> MELODY: The guys have generally been very nice. They haven't been full of nonsense, *but* I'll just be straight and say that I find it a lot easier to work with women than with men.
> CERI: For what reason?
> MELODY: Because I don't feel as comfortable. I feel slightly inferior, just that little bit.
> CERI: Do you mean musically?
> MELODY: Yes.
> CERI: Why?
> MELODY: Just the way you grow up, the way society makes you think.
> CERI: Do you think it is to do with the way we are taught?
> MELODY: Ja, just the whole thing…I think there are changes, but it's still happening. It's a slow process. (ibid.)

Although stereotypically influenced by a sense of social patriarchy, she still feels personally indignant: 'He does it to show me up' (ibid.), and so her self-confidence is weakened. Another sour collegial experience is again gender influenced—an instance revealing that a competent musician is not always given appropriate respect. Bass guitarist Kerry Hiles hired a male substitute to deputise for her for some performances in a musical theatre engagement. On returning to the theatre, Hiles discovered that the substitute had been trying to oust her from the job and replace her. She said of this: 'Part of me thinks: would he have tried that stunt with a man? It was really bad form! I know girls can be malicious and fairly backstabbing, but I'd have to scratch hard to find a girl who would do something like that' (Int. 2007).

In contrast, and despite Hiles' comment about female faults above, women have experienced nurturing relationships with female colleagues. Nkoto Malebye, for instance, spoke at length about Janine Neethling's influence on her craft and confidence: 'she changed my life' (Int. 2006). They worked together when Malebye was cast as a lead in *Soweto Story*, which Neethling musically directed. Neethling taught her 'the whole spirit of letting go, and letting

the music take you', proper breath control and other 'technicalities' (ibid.). 'She's a woman and she's warm and I felt comfortable … There was a lot of care, and at the same time she was real and said: this is what needs to be done … that's what makes her stand out: her warmth, her care, and she was just so natural about everything. It was so refreshing working with her' (ibid.). Malebye compared this experience to working with another musical director, a male, where 'there wasn't an openness.' Significantly, Janine Neethling, had this to offer about working relationships in her experience as a musical director:

> There are always people that believe they know better what will work and what won't work—even within your discipline—and interfere, and that's very hard to deal with, because in my nature I don't stand up and fight or confront necessarily. I will say if I think something is truly wrong, but apart from that I try to work *with* people to make something happen. And you always find in my job that it's managerial in terms of there are artists that you're taking care of: there are singers and there are musicians who are also insecure human beings and you need to boost them, and if the infrastructure within which they are working is unsettled and unhappy, it rubs off on your product. The product should always be the most important thing; the product being the performance—the best that those performers can possibly give of themselves. (Int. 2006)

Neethling shows an insightful awareness and respect for the often-felt fragility of musicians' egos and the need to nurture them as well as provide a supportive, pleasant working environment where possible. In discussing the numbers of women in various aspects of the music industry, she commented that while her gender has no bearing on whether she is selected for a job or not as musical director,[46] she does 'think being a woman makes me better at what I do' (ibid.). When I asked why, she responded: 'You have to be the mother of a cast', quickly qualifying this statement:

> You can take that too far: you can care too much, and the boundary lines can get blurred, and I definitely have been guilty of that as well. To carry people's issues with you is something that fewer men would do than women would do, for instance. If you really want to 'up' a performance for people to do what they need to do, women would tend to invest more than a male musical director would. (ibid.)

Whether male musical directors would have similar viewpoints is not in the scope of this research.

Cathy del Mei, like Malebye, acknowledged the support of a female colleague in particular, in her case a female event coordinator whose encouragement particularly bolstered her during her early career. Del Mei reflected: 'It's amazing when you look back and see the stepping-stones, and who was around you.' She cited others as supportive of her music-making too: her mother, her first boyfriend who created her first professional playing engagement for her at a club, and Duncan Faure who she described thus: 'He was very

[46] Neethling made this comment in relation to saying that for performers, however, their 'sex will have a lot more to do with whether they get employed or not' (2006).

inspirational… He took me under his wing, and he gave me tips on recording, ways of playing. We recorded an album together … That was an amazing break, but I also thought: 'Wow, if he believes in me…' (ibid.).[47]

When I asked Kristel Birkholtz about negative or supportive sources of support in her career, she described her own family as 'supportive and balanced', and her husband as supportive of her career, however she added further information, from the research she conducted towards her masters' degree, of how a creative career may require support (Int. 2010). She asked her respondents about their expectations on embarking on musical careers, and what their family's hopes or reservations about their career choice had been. They had varying responses from 'exaggerated feelings of success being possible' to cautioning: 'do something safe rather' (ibid.). Further, regarding lack of support from one's colleagues and management, Birkholtz relates the experience of a young female musician who had suffered something of a breakdown over a theatre engagement. I quote this incidence here from her thesis:

> A 30-something female musician was offered a verbal agreement to play a 3-month show out of town. In the agreement, accommodation was to be included in the form of her own flat. She reported to eventually being housed in the domestic quarters on the sound technician's property where she had to share cooking facilities with him. She complained that he was difficult and of dirty habits. She complained to the organiser that the accommodation was not what she had been offered originally. After the complaint was made, she found that relations with the sound technician deteriorated considerably and she felt he deliberately compromised her sound onstage in retaliation. There was no recourse for her to pursue for this action. The living arrangements and subsequent harassment caused her to have a minor psychological breakdown while she was away. (Birkholtz 2010, 165)

In contrast, Shannon Mowday said on being a female in a male-dominated musical setting:

> That's another thing as a woman in this industry: I'm normally the only woman in the band, and you're always going to get the "ne, ne, ne" and you're just going to have to learn to deal with it. Then again, should women have to put up with that? *No*! We shouldn't have to, but it's par for the course. You don't go and be a female truck driver and expect the other truckers not to make comments to you. It's the nature of the beast…! (Int. 2007)

In a similar vein, Janine Neethling (Int. 2007) said: 'You find misogynists out there! They do exist and that is awfully boring to have to deal with when you have to prove yourself to them, and I find that awfully tedious!' The vulnerability of the young woman Birkholtz described, resilience of Mowday and matter-of-factness of Neethling are starkly contrasted, yet all are responses to a similar situation: in a musical career, women musicians must sometimes cope in male-dominated environments.

[47] Duncan Faure was a songwriter for and band-member of Rabbitt, a very popular band in South Africa in the late 1970s. When Trevor Rabin left South Africa for America, Faure became lead vocalist. He later achieved noteworthy financial success with the composition of a song that Madonna recorded (Fortney n.d.: n.p.).

Laurie Levine (Int. 2006), a solo artist in the genre of what she describes as 'contemporary folk', articulated the issue of exclusion as a female artist, and said to me: 'Well you talk about the misogyny of rock. That's my big issue at the moment!' She gave the example of a British magazine *Untouched*:

> It's a brilliant magazine, a UK magazine, and it has good reviews, good writing and new release spots. The past few months they featured the best new releases [but] there's not one female artist [listed]. And this is the 'best of' and I thought: hold on a minute, why? I mean they do occasionally have an article about a female singer-songwriter, but very occasionally. (ibid.)

At the time of interviewing her, she had just been passed over for a well-known South African rock festival, and felt irritated that so few female acts were chosen:

> I want to say to them: surely you need to balance out your line up, or at least have 60-40 [60% male/40% female]? …I think my main experience has been exclusion … I find them [referring to the festival organizers] very misogynist … How many women are going to be featured on the lineup? I can guarantee you there won't be more than five or six, and there are probably about thirty bands or more over the weekend, maybe more. I just think in that respect, there is exclusion. I would imagine that female rock bands would find that, because rock is seen as a male domain, exemplified by uncut editorial choices. (2006)

While Levine felt event organisers might marginalise female performers, she was positive about audiences: 'I wouldn't say there's been major discrimination aside from that. I think that people love to see a woman up on stage with a male band, where a woman is leading the band. I think that people find that very attractive. People in this country are still not that used to seeing a woman as a front person' (Int. 2006).

So far I have discussed relationships with friends and colleagues, but an important influence on a musical career is that of music teachers. Ziza Mhlongo is in her late thirties, an accomplished, well-regarded singer who has sustained a steady career across varied genres as a performing singer as well as teacher. Yet when I asked Mhlongo (Int. 2010) about sources of support in her career, she mentioned surprisingly few people: 'You and Reza Khota are the only people that I can say have been musically encouraging'.[48] While she battled to think of supportive colleagues during her career, she did mention several university lecturers who were positive influences earlier on. She said of her singing tutor at university: 'so as much as she was really nurturing and giving, she was hard on me too, she really was' (Int. 2010). Thus Mhlongo acknowledged that although encouraging, her teacher was at times severe, equipping her student with an honest appreciation of the standard required to be successful in a musical career.

[48] Mhlongo and I studied in the Wits Music Department concurrently in the early 1990s, and in 2010 I was the saxophonist in her band Ziza and the Solos.

Teachers can play a very influential part of developing a young musician's talent and self-confidence. Several other women mentioned their teachers in the light Mhlongo did—encouraging yet challenging. Others mentioned teachers as positive influences and/or role models. Nkoto Malebye was encouraged by one of her junior schoolteachers to audition for the National School of the Arts (NSA) (Int. 2007). Once enrolled, she was inspired by peers and teachers, her female drama teacher in particular, a 'passionate and powerful' female role model (ibid.). She also spoke of a creatively inspiring friendship with a classmate, Kwelagobe Sekele, with whom, at the time of our interview, she was performing professionally in his band The Kwani Experience. After matric, she enrolled at the Pretoria Technicon and describes it as initially 'so hard'. 'They [the teachers] break you down, and you make that choice whether you want to go on. Well, that's how it was for me!' In particular, she was criticised for being overweight, and told to 'get on that treadmill and tone it down' (ibid.). This was a challenging time for Malebye, and she remembers her family giving her the strength to weather such criticism:

> I remembered my Mum saying: 'do your best and remember what you are about. Eventually time will pass and people will appreciate you just for who you are'… all your life you have been told this is who you are.… then you get to dance class and they're telling you, and being African isn't appreciated…she even said to me: 'who's going to hire you? They'll have to make specific costumes for you!' And it broke me down, it broke me down. Fitness is good, so I started working hard on my body, but at the same time I thought: 'I don't want to lose [weight], this is who I am! But I want to look good, and as a performer that's what you have to do.' (ibid.)

Vicky Goddard mentioned her lecturer, Prof. Elizabeth Oehrle, as a seminal influence, describing Oehrle as 'an amazing woman who inspired me so much.[49] She taught me about going into the classroom and *doing*, not just talking which really helped me. And she was really instrumental—pardon the pun—in my becoming a music educator' (Int. 2006). Others mentioned their instrumental teachers as particularly inspiring. Abbey Artico, for instance, reveres her saxophone teachers, Mike Rossi and Kevin Davidson (Int. 2006).

Kristel Birkholtz mentioned an entirely different aspect of relationships with teachers (Int. 2010). Her own experience as a youngster had been positive: 'I never really saw gender in music when I was at school. My mother was a musician. My role models and my teachers were very strong and positive … my teachers at university were also very positive.' Yet when she first began to teach the violin, Birkholtz realized 'the dangerous environment' the student-teacher relationship could produce. She described to me how several of her female students divulged to her that 'they had problems with male teachers, some form of boundary

[49] Oehrle edits *The Talking Drum*, an ethnomusicology and music education publication.

crossing…' (ibid.). Without being explicit, Bronwen Lubbe echoed this sense of boundaries being crossed by a teacher, and described to me the 'horrible experience with a male piano teacher at high school' who 'wouldn't let me go and just trapped me in this dreadful relationship and I started to really not enjoy the piano' (Int. 2005). Her tone of voice made clear that he had been inappropriate in some way, and she had felt very ill at ease. Tu Nokwe (Int. 2006) articulated this experience explicitly. When I asked how she learnt the guitar, she related how she taught herself from books; when she tried formal lessons, teachers wanted to 'touch' her. 'Then it's a problem, *ja*?'

Other women also spoke of teachers who crossed appropriate physical boundaries with students, and were strongly vocal in their disapproval.[50] One interviewee spoke of several lecturers at the tertiary institution where she studied music pursuing romantic affairs with students. When I asked if this was allowed, her response was: 'Well, they're open about it. I don't know. But some of the lecturers have problems with it, because they think it shouldn't be happening.' She also took umbrage with certain male lecturers' demeaning and sexist attitudes towards female students. When she raised the issue with some of the male lecturers, they did not take her seriously and seemed oblivious to their behaviour being inappropriate. She mentioned that a female classmate of hers said to one such lecturer: 'Please don't talk to me like that.' He was taken aback, and she surmised that he had never had a girl speak to him like that. She described further that their inappropriate behaviour ranged from flirting to asking inappropriate questions about personal things, such as personal lives and boyfriends, which made female students feel uncomfortable. 'It's really out of line! I think that girls get a harder time, but it's just like that, and I find it quite offensive.'

Another woman expressed her frustration with some aspects of the same music department, 'where all the jazz lecturers are having affairs with the students basically. It's been an on-going thing for years, the way they view them, … they're not viewing the students seriously.' She mentioned this in the light of talking about how women and men are perceived differently in musical circles, and how her vocalising her concerns at the time had 'rubbed people up the wrong way.' 'If a man – again it's generalizing – would say: "this is wrong", he'd be regarded as taking a stand, whereas with a woman [people react]: "Oh God, *she's* awkward!" '

[50] Here I have deliberately concealed names of both the interviewees and male teachers.

Conversely, several women I spoke to were acutely aware of *appropriate* interaction with their teachers. Bronwen Clacherty, for instance, described her vibraphone teacher at the University of Cape Town, Frank Mallows as 'very respectful of me.'

> He's not a very touchy person. He won't put his hand on your shoulder or anything like that. When he was teaching me double-strokes, he said: 'I'm going to take your hand, is that ok?' So he took my hand, and showed me. I so appreciated him asking: "is it ok to take your hand?" [Jazz drummer] Clement [Benny] also did that with me. He played a rhythm and I couldn't get it, and he asked: "is it ok if I put my hands on your hands to show you?" I really like the fact that they respected me like that. (Int. 2007)

It is also important to consider close gender relationships in marriage, again supported with a variety of statements and comments from the women musicians I interviewed. This discussion could have been placed in the earlier section about family influence, however it has relevance in a position of gender relationships as well, especially since it relates to the positives and negatives of a career in music. Several women described their husbands as a positive source of support but inevitably some relationships involve tensions which affected the wives' careers.

At the 2007 Moshito[51] conference, panelist Yvonne Chaka Chaka[52] fielded a question from the audience as to how she had succeeded as a woman in the music industry.[53] Her answer was that she had a very supportive, understanding husband. She joked that she had 'trained him well', adding on a serious note that his willingness to care for their children while she was performing had been crucial to her career. Max Mojapelo describes Chaka Chaka's husband, as giving her 'the support needed in this hectic business' (2008: 99). Many of the women I spoke to mentioned their husbands in a similar light. Ziza Mhlongo described her husband as 'quietly supportive' and 'there when I need him,' and that his musical tastes had been particularly influential. Melody van der Merwe (2006) described her non-musician husband as 'very understanding' of her music-making, explaining he did not mind her gigging at night.

Kristel Birkholtz's husband, although employed full-time in another industry, regularly accompanies her on the guitar, helps her with musical arrangements and co-produced her album *Burning Bridges*. She thanks him for 'endless hands-on and moral support' in her

[51] Moshito means 'rhythm' in Sepedi. The Moshito music conference and exhibition has been held annually in Newtown, Johannesburg since 1994 (Moshito 2007: n.p.).
[52] Yvonne Chaka Chaka has been a South African singing superstar since the 1980s and is well known for her humanitarian work and business acumen.
[53] This was in a 'breakaway session' entitled 'Women's Role In the Music Industry' (Moshito 2007: n.p.).

2009 album *The Sea in Spring*. Cathy del Mei's husband[54] is also a musician yet earns his living in another profession. She explains his appreciation of her musicianship, and his understanding of what a musical career can entail:

> This is what makes me who I am and that's what he loves about me. He would never hold me back, never! Or say you can't do that. So the nice thing is that we can sometimes play together which is such a treat, but when we're not working together, which is most of the time, he supports me. He has no problem with the fact that I'm playing, number one, and number two, with what else goes with the industry; having to socialize, speak to people, getting the pick-up lines, and he's not threatened by that it at all, he know it goes with the territory. He's not insecure in himself at all, and he knows I'm coming home to him. So we have a very unique and very lucky relationship which really works for us. …I never feel I have to withhold anything from him… (2006)

Connie Bentlage's ex-husband is not a musician, but his support during their marriage helped her to achieve her break into musical theatre when their son was less than a year old. Offered a job she initially turned down, her husband reacted: 'Are you mad? This is exactly the kind of thing that you would like to get involved with' (Int. 2006). So she accepted the job with his encouragement and the practical help of her mother-in-law who looked after their baby son while Connie performed.

When I had a second recorded conversation with trumpeter Kgaogelo Mailula, we included her husband, Magalane Phoshoko (Int. 2, 2012). Phoshoko participated comfortably and with interest through a long discussion, at times very concentrated on women and gender in music. Phoshoko is also a musician: an accomplished pianist, composer, recorded artist, as well as music educator and researcher.[55] Notably, both studied a Higher Diploma of Education in classical music at the University of the Witwatersrand followed by Bachelor of Music degrees in jazz: Mailula at the University of KwaZulu-Natal and Phoshoko through the University of Cape Town. He is not simply supportive of her career; he is actively involved in it. He composed and produced all the tracks on Mailula's 1999 CD *La Mogale*, and together they are writing music education textbooks and have formed a company though which they intend to publish these. Mailula describes Phoshoko as a 'revelation' in her life (Majola 2007: n.p.). Kgaogelo Mailula's experience, in a very positive way, exposed another such aspect: how partners cope with a wife or girlfriend having a public profile (and all it can entail: media coverage, fame, fans, and adoring male fans in particular). She described to me how she would sometimes leave performances discreetly before the band finished

[54] He was the drummer for a well-known band in the 1980s.
[55] Phoshoko has presented papers about his research into indigenous musical instruments and performance practice in South Africa at various conferences internationally, including the annual International Society for Music Education conference in Beijing (2012).

playing to avoid being mobbed backstage, and of the numerous peculiar marriage requests she has had from fans. Phoshoko shook his head, laughing, while she spoke.

Laurie Levine answered my question of whether her partner was supportive with objectivity:

> In terms of boyfriend, he's at this point incredibly supportive and encouraging and only wants me to make it and is totally comfortable with what comes with that. But he doesn't know what making it comes with as yet. He's a writer so also works at strange times … For now, he's fantastic. I think he'll always support me and encourage me, but when it comes to working late hours and travelling it might be different. In terms of friends: very, very supportive. Friends are always the best when it comes to your career! It's always parents that give the most resistance. (Int. 2006)

When I spoke to her, Laurie Levine acknowledged her partner's support yet articulated an awareness that certain aspects of a creative career can impinge on a relationship: late nights out performing and periods away from home on tour, for instance.

Other women told me of less ideal situations of their partners' lack of support for their music-making, which, therefore, generate marital tensions. Saxophonist Ndithini Mbali (Int. 2006) told me: 'I'll tell you one thing: sometimes our partners don't at all like it when we women go out there and do our thing. I have a problem at home with that.' Her musician boyfriend initially encouraged her to 'go out there' and in fact produced her album. Her late night gigs, attention from audiences and even media interviews, however, increasingly angered him. After describing his lack of understanding of her need to rehearse or perform at night, she said: 'He is jealous. So I think that's one of the things that makes us women draw back a little bit' (ibid.). Mbali went on to describe her boyfriend's fury over a particular period that she was rehearsing at night for an album launch. He protested: 'these guys, they're just trying to impress you!' She was incredulous since it was a women's band so she could not understand his resistance. He asked her 'to choose between him and the music.' 'No, I have to work,' she responded. The only solution she saw was to move out for a period: 'I must just move so I can go and work … Staying here with you and having to draw back every time when I have a gig just because you're a man and I'm working with men … it doesn't go like that!' Once the work was over, she moved back in with him again. However, there is a surprise ending to this tale. The week before I interviewed Mbali, there was a fire in their house, and in the panic to get out the one item her boyfriend rescued was her saxophone:

> I asked him: 'what came in your mind last night that you saw everything that was in the house, and you left your ID [Identity document], your everything, but you just took my saxophone and put it outside! What came into your mind?' He said: 'no, I think this instrument is very important to you. You need it. …It's so precious to you, so that's why I saved it. (Int. 2006)

Some women were reluctant to talk about such things. Melody van der Merwe, for instance, strongly resisted the idea that relationship tensions over the demands of a musical career were caused by gender relations:

> But wouldn't that be the same if it was a guy going out all the time for gigs in the face of resistance? I don't think that's a female thing. I knew one musician whose wife was so unreasonably jealous, he just kind of gave it up, because the pleasure he got out of doing the work didn't make up for the amount of shit—excuse my language—that he got for it afterwards. She was so difficult. And I think a lot of the guys have it. (Int. 2006)

'Perhaps my mother's generation would have been different', she ventured, 'but I think there's more understanding in our generation' (ibid.).

On the other hand, Kristel Birkholtz and Gwen Ansell spoke more openly of situations of tension and concern for women. Both Birkholtz (Int. 2010) and Ansell (2004; Int. 2007) have conducted research into the South African music industry, and so were able to speak not only from their own perspectives but to comment on other women's experiences they have been privy to.[56] In one instance, Birkholtz spoke of a performer (whom she chooses not to name) who dated a man she met after one of her shows. He had been 'wowed' by her on stage, but once their relationship became serious, he wanted her to stop performing. Birkholtz explains:

> He saw it as a threat that she was now attracting other men by performing on stage. It really played on this woman's mind: 'am I being a tart by performing?' … The relationship was quite tumultuous … and he very nearly got her to stop performing. It was her only source of income, which meant it was a very negative situation. (Int. 2010)

Birkholtz sensitively described how this relationship exacerbated something of a crisis for this woman about 'her identity as a female performer' (Int. 2010). She explained that this was not a unique experience, and gave another example of a female performer whose husband started to object to her stage outfits and put 'restrictions on what she could wear and what she could do' (ibid.).

Janine Neethling's husband is an actor, and 'so understands the nature of the entertainment business' (Int. 2006). Even so, she mused that her busy schedule and career demands are not always easy for him to deal with:

> So although it drives him insane every now and then when I put Sammy [their son] to bed and I've got to go and do a gig, he does understand it in principle although emotionally it may be harder to deal with… And I am very busy. I am very busy! It doesn't mean that I *actually* make enough money, but

[56] Both Ansell and Birkholtz were careful to conceal the names of these women where appropriate, but related their stories to me, believing their experiences to be of relevance and importance to my research.

> I am the soul breadwinner in this family at the moment which is a very a sensitive topic for my husband. (ibid.)[57]

Neethling described a supportive partner, however, as a must in her life:

> I've been lucky in that the two long-term male companions in my life have both been very supportive of what I do. For me that's a given [that] a companion in my life would have to see me perform first and know what I do, and have to get that before I would be able to have a relationship with them, and that's a given. Because music is more than just a career, and it *has* to be accepted. (ibid.)

Wendy Twyford's first husband, although understanding the demands of a musical career, found them hard to come to terms with. Wendy met her first husband through music, since they played in a band together whilst studying chemistry at university. Yet after Wendy left her teaching job to pursue her music, their relationship ended:

> Music brought us together, but then in many respects it was music that became a rift between us, because I was desperate to pursue my passion and find completion in myself with regards to my love of music, and he saw it as a threat. And in retrospect it felt like he was saying make a choice: me or your music, but it was far more complex than that. (2006)

She describes her second husband as 'almost…the antithesis, encouraging me, and pushing me in areas that I was nervous to pursue in the first place' (2006).

Celeste Ribeiro experienced tension with both her first husband and her current husband over her career:

> I was married before, and had boyfriends, but to be honest it didn't really matter what they thought, because I was going to do it anyway, which is what I did. And I was always very independent, and had to make my own money. And if they didn't like it, I wouldn't be swayed. I think that was one of the problems in my first marriage. I was still young, and I was making a career for myself, so it didn't matter if I flew to Durban for three weeks. My marriage didn't come first…my first husband was very jealous of me, but he never showed it. He used to come to most of my gigs, and he didn't try to stop me from doing what I wanted to do. He wasn't that type of a person. This husband found it a little harder to accept, and it caused a lot of problems in the marriage initially. Now, and this is a personal issue that I told you about—we split and one of the reasons was that he couldn't handle me working six nights a week in the Barnyard—he is very proud of me and he always shows me off. But there was a point at which he couldn't handle certain things, and he did think that everybody was trying to get into me. (2006)

This conflict with her current husband was resolved. Celeste describes the outcome:

> Now he doesn't even know whom I'm working with or where I am playing most of the time. He won't even ask me how a gig went, and it's great, because there are no issues. I think he knows now, if we could go through that and come through it, I'm not going to go out there and do anything against the marriage. (2006)

Twyford and Ribeiro's experiences were not unique; in other interviews women spoke of leaving marriages or relationships in which irreconcilable tensions occurred because of their attempts to sustain a musical career (Mortimer 2006; Bentlage 2006; Lebabo 2006; Insinger

[57] At the time of the interview, Neethling's husband was infirm and being cared for at home. Sadly, he died in April 2013.

2006; Nokwe 2006). Only a minority of these women spoke about having to choose between marriage and a career, and most had *left* such marriages or relationships. This is a very different narrative from that of the black women musicians presented in Lara Allen's research :

> In practice, … few women musicians were able simultaneously to fulfill successfully the roles of wife and artist. Many had to choose. Whilst, for example, marrying severely curtailed the careers of Dolly Ngubane and Thoko Thomo (Ngubane, Int.; Molefe and Mzileni 1997: n.p.), Zakithi Dlamini and Lynette Leeuw refused marriage proposals from men who insisted that they give up performing (Dlamini, Int.; Leeuw, Int.). Dolly Rathebe and Mary Thobei were not given the choice: they were prevented from marrying the fathers of their first children by their prospective parents-in-law who disapproved of music as a profession (Rathebe, Int. 1; Thobei, Int.). Marriage was commonly expected to end a woman's musical career (*BW* 12.11.55; *ILN* 3.12.55), and the decision to keep performing merited press mention (*D*. 11.52; *BW* 20.11.54). Husbands who proactively supported their wives' careers by looking after children, or providing an escort to performances and on tour, were considered valuable and unusual (Rathebe, Int. 1; Mgcina, Int.; Masuku, Int; *D*. 4.53). Some female artists suggest that marrying a male musician was the ideal: then both partners experience and understand the demands of the profession (Dlamini, Int.), although this did not help Dolly Rathebe, whose husband, jazz musician Welcome Duru, assaulted her for performing as a guest artist at a concert given by a touring troupe (Rathebe, Int. 1). Mostly concerned about retaining control over their wives' sexuality, husbands objected to women artists spending professional time with other men, exposing themselves to the fantasies and advances of male audience members, being out in public at night and spending time away from home when on tour. Some husbands also struggled with their wives' fame and superior earning capacity (Masuka, Int. 1; Kubeka, Int.). (2000: 222-223)[58]

Through my research I hoped to discover that it is easier for a woman musician in South Africa today to balance a musical career with marriage. For the most part, my interviews revealed that indeed it is. Yet while the extreme sexism and patriarchy that Rathebe's generation of women musicians experienced may have receded, issues of jealously, control and tension remain. Fortunately this is not the case for *all* women musicians, but it remains a theme in my interviews nonetheless.

Motherhood

Following the above discussion of marriage, a further aspect of research arises concerning motherhood and the pull of home commitments on a woman musician's career: what would contemporary female musicians' experiences of balancing a career with children be? In Lara Allen's interviews with black women singers and instrumentalists of the 1950s, she observed that motherhood was an important, deeply-felt identity, and an expression of fulfillment, independence and power. Allen uses Cherryl Walker's division of motherhood into the three

[58] I have included Allen's numerous references in this quoted passage. Most refer to interviews she conducted, and one to Molefe and Mzileni's book which has been referenced in this thesis previously. All the other references pertain to press publications: *Ilanga Laze Natal (ILN)*, *Bantu World (BW)* and *Drum Magazine (D.)*. Allen includes these publication names in her thesis' bibliography, so I do not reference them in mine.

functionally separate facets of 'discourse, practice and social identity' to guide her own discussion of the 'rift between myth and reality' concerning the relationship between women musicians and their children (2000: 224; Walker 1995: 424). Allen concludes that:

> Women musicians' experience of motherhood, as identity through practice, runs contrary to public opinion that regards them as unconcerned or incapable mothers. The primary reason for this discrepancy is probably related to the fact that a great deal of public discourse is controlled by men, whilst the identity and practice of motherhood is managed more directly by women. (2000: 226)

For the majority of stage women in the 1950s, as Allen explains, the capacity not just to bear children, but also to provide for them, forms a central aspect of women musicians' self-respect and identity. For many, their maternal role was almost completely separated from wifehood and the state of matrimony. 'Their lives illustrate a process', writes Allen, 'which Walker identifies as occurring increasingly throughout the twentieth century, of the uncoupling of motherhood and marriage for and by African women, in terms of practice and social identity, if not at the level of discourse' (Allen 2000: 226-7).

While Allen noted that some women reflected back on certain liaisons with romantic nostalgia, for the most part, the women she interviewed who had been stars in the 1950s, felt a 'distinct lack of interest in a male partner' by the mid-1990s. 'Most have children and grandchildren', wrote Allen, 'and regard a husband as a nuisance' (2000: 223). In sharp contrast to this, she pointed out, women musicians specified motherhood as a vital aspect of their identity, 'their children mattering more than anything else. This contradicts the widespread assumption that stage women, as part of their general immorality, make bad mothers' (ibid.: 224). Furthermore, Allen's interviews revealed that 'the capacity to bear and raise children constitutes a currency of social prestige amongst women that exists apart from the pressures or values contributed by men.' Allen noted that 'within the female musical community, to be without a husband is no particular disgrace or disadvantage, whilst to be childless is a deep cause for concern.' Allen commented that her own childlessness gave most of her interviewees a sense of seniority over her 'at least as effective as hierarchies generated by differences in age, race, or education' (ibid.: 225).

While the roles of artist as wife and as mother, and of women musicians' experience of balancing these roles, featured so strongly in Allen's research, these issues did not emerge as central in the discussions I had. The overall sense from my interviews was that these issues concerned the women I spoke to far less, revealed by the fact they did not dwell on them. That only a few women raised issues (or proffered them when I asked) around motherhood

may suggest that this is not a problematic area for contemporary women musicians, but of course this is not necessarily the case. My interviewees, significantly it must be noted, were predominantly white and young (although I had initially not intended this to be the case). Issues of finance to afford to pay a child minder, whether in a day-care facility, in schools or at home were most apparent, even if not always articulated. It was mostly the single mothers among my interviewees, like Connie Bentlage and Lipalesa Lebabo for instance, who spoke openly of the challenges of balancing parenthood and a musical career (both Int. 2006). When I asked Neethling why there are not more female instrumentalists on the scene, her answer was pragmatic: 'Possibly because they can't make a living? … It's hard to be a specialist musician in this country anyway, especially in the jazz world. To make a living is extremely hard!' (Int. 2006). She immediately then proffered:

> And freelance life you pay a huge price, so especially for women if you do have a family, you need a strong infrastructure: either family or assisted help to take care of your children when you are working. Children *cannot* come to performances from a very young age, or necessarily if there is a loud drum kit involved. I kept my son away for a while; I had him in vocal rehearsals. I didn't want his ears next to a drum kit, so it's taken me a couple of *years*; only now at age four now can I take him to a festival where he can sit through all the shows and I can make a little bed for him and he plays and he does his thing! So it's very hard. There's an enormous price to pay and your kids give you grief because of it, so for women in general, that's going to be a problem. If you've got a family, you've got a problem; it is an *inherent* problem. Wendy Oldfield took her baby into studios since the baby was born, but somehow she managed to cope with that. It is extremely rare .... (ibid.)

Neethling's perspective—bearing in mind she was one of the more mature musicians I spoke to (although only just into her forties)—does suggest that there are indeed issues facing women around motherhood and the pull of home commitments, but that the spectrum of women whom I interviewed was not broad enough to outline these adequately.

A few points of interest, however, did arise. Celeste Ribeiro described how motherhood affects the choices she makes professionally. She now only accepts work that keeps her out late if it is artistically and financially rewarding enough: 'I've got Jade [her daughter] to worry about', and I've got to get up early in the morning.' She also reflected:

> And I suppose I've changed as well. I'm a mother, and I love being a mother, and I love my family and I wouldn't do anything to ruin that, not for a gig, not for a band. It's not worth it. At the end of the day it's not important. It's important to do your work, but that whole undercurrent thing which happens in this industry – and it does – you've got to lift yourself out of that. (2006)

In our second interview, corporate function entertainer Cathy del Mei mentioned how her older child does not want her to go out at night. Del Mei enjoys the practical support of her husband in these matters, and acknowledges that her performing career (which largely involves night performances) would not be possible without this. Nonetheless, she feels

conflicted over leaving her children to go to work (Int. 2012). Kristel Birkholtz also mentioned a poignant anecdote from another female musician she interviewed in the course of her research (and with whom she also works professionally): this woman has a young son who reacts angrily to the instrument in her hand when he realizes she is leaving home. His association of the instrument with 'Mummy leaving' (to a gig or rehearsal) causes her anxiety and effort to prevent repetition of this reaction (Birkholtz 2010). There can be no doubt of the difficulty of upsetting children who are too young to understand why a mother leaves home for professional needs, and of the stress caused when a mother feels torn between parental responsibility and the need to earn a living. This is no different for many women in other professions but it is exacerbated for female musicians by their working hours.[59]

Tu Nokwe (2006) spoke of her niece Ayanda's desire to become a mother: 'She's a woman now. She wants to start a family now, big time.[60] And I said: you have to be strong, because to balance family and career is not easy. But she thinks that's what is going to make her happy.' In response to this, I asked Tu Nokwe how a woman might find balance, like for any woman in any career? Her answer: 'It's not easy, but it can be done. You need a lot of support and openness, but it can be done' (Int. 2006).

Other women musicians either did not have children, or expressed a reticence to have them in the future. Kerry Hiles, for instance, explained: 'I have such respect for Cathy [del Mei]. I don't know how she juggles her career and family. David [Hiles' husband] is a musician too. I've only ever dated musicians. Neither of us wants to give up what we have and adjust things to accommodate raising a child' (Int. 2006). I suggested earlier that the issues of motherhood raised by Walker (1995) and Allen (2000) did not feature as prominently in the consciousness of the women musicians to whom I spoke. There may be a reason for this discrepancy other than race: of the twenty-eight women I interviewed between 2006 and 2010, only eight women were mothers.[61]

[59] Anikki Maswanganye, for instance, acknowledges this publically when she writes: 'I thank you—Bridgy S—It's been hard for you to see mommy leave you and come back late at night. You've always been there and always insisting I have to be competent' (liner notes, Ladies in Jazz 2004).
[60] Ayanda was twenty-three at the time of my separate interviews with her and her aunt, Tu, in 2006. There is a photo of her baby in the CD sleeve of her 2007 debut album.
[61] Of the twenty-eight women I interviewed: six of my respondents said openly that they had decided not to have children, (three of them motivated by feeling it too complicated in tandem with their performance career); three women shared their deep desire to become mothers, even though they were not. By 2013 as I complete this dissertation, four more of them have become mothers, and one woman has had a second child.

One interviewee in particular raised some issues which pregnancy caused in her working life.[62] She had to negotiate working relationships with male musicians who were not particularly sensitive or thoughtful as she became more heavily pregnant. For instance, they continued to smoke around her. She explained: 'Most of the projects I'm involved in … are very male-orientated … I am the only woman ... It becomes very hard, very difficult because they don't have to think about these things.' She had to think into the future of how she would manage late nights, rehearsing for long hours and touring regularly, with having a baby, breastfeeding, and not having a secure childcare support network. At the time of our interview, she was deeply stressed by her situation. She summed up the problem as one of 'lack of respect'. The pregnancy seemed to exacerbate tension over further issues such as the lack of written contracts, clarity over pay, and being taken seriously: 'If there was a business structure, if there were contracts, and there was a paper trail, it would breed a lot more respect for what you actually do. I think things would be very different' (Int. 2006).

Acknowledging that she was fortunate enough to be equipped with a good musical education and solid skills, she wondered how other young women musicians would cope in a similar situation:

> They don't have the skills and aren't empowered enough within themselves to make it happen. If you look at what I am going through, it's very difficult for other women going through similar situations. They might not make the same decisions I have made, and will fall back on the structures for them, around them, and…you feel stuck and there is nothing you can do**.**

This particular situation paints a graphic picture of a gender clash between sensitive personal needs and tough professional insistence.

Other women echoed these concerns too. When Elena Zlatkova (Int. 2007) raised the point that contemporary music (referring to her work in theatre and 'corporates') yields a shorter career for a woman musician than classical music, not just because of the emphasis on what she described as 'the visual'[63] and then stated it bluntly: 'What if I'm pregnant?' From her experience as a violinist in theatre productions, Kristel Birkholtz relayed instances of women who were 'dropped' once they fell pregnant. 'I do definitely know of women in those circles who had no contract: they were gone. That's terrible: to feel you are jeopardising your career if you fall pregnant, if I want to get married, or take a honeymoon or any of that stuff' (Int.

[62] Although this woman spoke openly on the record about these issues, I have chosen to conceal her name to protect the confidentiality of the people and working relationships involved.
[63] I explore the importance of image and sex appeal in contemporary music in Chapter Four.

2010). So although motherhood did not emerge as such a strong feature of these women's identities as expected, these examples made it clear that there were nonetheless ongoing challenges facing women musicians.

These stories raise concern for women's knowledge of how their rights are in fact protected by law. In the case of being employed by a theatre, for instance, without a written contract, one certainly would be able to take the theatre to the CCMA under the LRA. Further, a woman would have recourse under the BCEA on the issue of maternity leave. She might not keep her performing job, but at least the facts point towards a period of maternity leave pay being applicable.

Sexual vibes

Here I turn from topics of marriage and the tensions of having children to a further area of relationship tension of which is not always openly spoken. In my interviews, an interesting dynamic to gender issues came up concerning relationships between musicians who work together: the issue of sexual tension. Several women hinted at this, but it was only clearly articulated by a few. Shannon Mowday expressed this tension succinctly:

> There's chemistry between people, and the difficulty is knowing where it's musical chemistry and where it's sexual chemistry. That's the difficulty, because they [meaning men] always get it wrong! (Int. 2007)

Mowday feels that there is a gender dynamic to relationships between musicians who work together, and that men generally interact with a female colleague differently than they would with other men:

> You know I have the most beautiful experiences with musicians: some of the most beautiful and some of the most awful experiences, but every single time…you always have a male reacting to you being female. I've just been in Norway and immediately it's: male/female. Always! (Int. 2007)

Bronwen Clacherty reflected on her experience of dating a well-regarded jazz musician as complicated because she had to come to terms with the differences between the man and the artist. She explained it thus:

> Well, it's something that I had to realize that helped me to become wiser. I don't remember how I realized this, but there was a moment when I did. And it's very difficult to separate people from their music. I was in awe of him; had all of his albums; it's so easy to feel you know a person because you have his albums. Knowing him on a personal level, and knowing his music…for a time I couldn't listen to his albums; there was a whole lot of stuff that upset me because I was dealing with our relationship…and then I moved on from there. I just notice that if you see a musician performing and they play beautifully, you know…they've got you! (Int. 2007)

Mowday echoed this same experience:

> I know I fall in love all the time in my band. Bang! Like a piano player: man, you make a beautiful sound…I've actually been in relationships with musicians until I realize: hey man, this is slightly 'pear' [-shaped], because is it the person or is it the music? You get confused, and that's a difficult thing to learn, because you have to maintain that level of band and personal thing—keep it apart. Because once you start bringing it on to the bandstand, that's *bad*! Bad news, and I've done it before. You've got to realize that some chemistry that happens is musical chemistry. Members of the same sex have it all the time, but we get confused because it's male-female, and you end up thinking: what am I doing and what's going on here? (Int. 2007)

Mowday stressed the importance of recognising this dynamic from her perspective of often being the only woman in a band. Franka Insinger articulates a self-confidence issue at the heart of her similar experiences: 'I started seeing him [a jazz musician] for a while, because I was so in awe of him. And I always thought I couldn't be a brilliant musician' (Int. 2006).

What was revealing was how few other women articulated this issue. Interestingly, none of the singers I spoke to mentioned sexual tension with band members as part of their experience: it was only female instrumentalists who did. Perhaps instrumentalists as opposed to singers experience the appreciation or admiration of a colleague's musical skills and offerings in a different way.[64] No doubt there are many instances of similar sexual tension in the workplace, but for these instrumentalists it certainly featured as something that had taken some experience and maturity to recognize and express.

Sexual harassment and rape

In sharing some of their experiences, many of the women I interviewed have articulated an on-going struggle against sexism that is not easily talked about in public. Sadly, more of these women than I had expected spoke of sexual harassment. For myself as a researcher, one of the most challenging aspects of this project was considering how to document the high number of incidents of sexual harassment that these women had experienced, and of rape in some extreme cases.

A surprising number of the women I interviewed (thirteen women out of twenty-eight interviewees) spoke to me of sexual harassment that they or other women working in the music industry had experienced. Yet very few of these women were prepared to talk about these incidents 'on the record'. It was only after getting to know me and trust me that they

[64] See Chapter Four for further discussion of this issue.

shared their experiences with me confidentially, often months after our formal interview. Three women, for instance, spoke of having been raped by fellow musicians. Other respondents, not the thirteen women mentioned above, acknowledged that sexual harassment happens, but they became very uncomfortable talking about it, quickly leading the discussion elsewhere. This indicated to me that sexual harassment does take place in the South African music industry, yet it is not easy to discuss or to document. After carefully considering the ethics governing the interviews I conducted, I have chosen to write up only the incidents that my interviewees spoke of 'on the record'. First, however, I will give a historical perspective on these issues.

Historically in South Africa, with the advent of commercial popular culture disseminated to the urban black population through the mass media from the late 1940s, sexual appeal became an accepted and expected aspect of any female performance artist's public image (Allen 2000: 228). 'This functioned both as a freedom from the strictures of the Christian educated elite, and as a burden', writes Lara Allen, 'for each individual was forced to negotiate her personal and sexual boundaries without the protection provided by social mores' (ibid.). Allen explains further:

> The resulting set of interactions between women musicians and sexuality produced an ambiguous, contradictory and disorderly historical reality; for many women musicians embraced, revelled in and benefitted from their sexual appeal, whilst simultaneously enduring the commercial exploitation of their sexuality by others, and negotiating the constant possibility of sexual harassment and physical abuse. During the 1950s women musicians adopted, and were represented in the guise of, various roles that constituted them as sexual objects. (2000: 228-9)

During the 1950s, high profile singers working in Johannesburg lived under the threat of abduction and were commonly heckled by gangsters (Allen 2000; Ansell 2004; Ballantine 2012). Z.B. Molefe writes euphemistically that 'life for an African woman singer was no bed of roses', explaining that 'physical safety was a major problem, the biggest danger having come from the *tsotsis*, who regarded glamorous women performers as easy targets and harassed them in every possible way' (Molefe and Mzileni 1997: n.p.). There are several anecdotes in *A Common Hunger to Sing* which allude to the harassment of singers. For example: 'Nomonde [Sihawu] shrinks as she recalls an incident where Susan Gabashane had to flee the famous Odin Cinema in Sophiatown when the thugs broke up the show because they wanted the singer' (Molefe and Mzileni 1997: n.p.).[65] Miriam Makeba was one of the

[65] Allen and Ballantine cite other examples of the abuse and harassment of women musicians (Allen 2000: 84, 229-232; Ballantine 2012: 152-154). Both Allen and Ballantine cite Clive Glaser's research on *tsotsi* gangs in

most harassed singers of the era, however Dolly Rathebe was 'the most high profile singer to have actually endured an abduction, missing a performance of Alfred Herbert's *African Jazz and Variety* in the process' (Allen 2000: 90).

Writing of sexual violence, harassment and women musicians in the 1950s, Allen defined a form of harassment known as *quid pro quo*: this 'more insidious mode of physical and psychological abuse occurs when the perpetrator of unwanted sexual attention is in a position of power over the recipient.' Although sexual harassment was not recognized as a concept during the 1950s (the first lawsuit in South Africa occurred only in 1989), she explains it was rife in the music industry:

> Industry gatekeepers were known to solicit sexual favours from female artists in return for career opportunities … and to withdraw employment or create a hostile working environment for women who refused. South Africa is far from unique in this regard. *Quid pro quo* (Sutherland 1991: 197) sexual harassment is so routine in Zimbabwe, for instance, that 'sex for work' is a music industry slogan. (Allen 2000: 230; Impey 1992: 156)

Some women musicians have spoken with candour about the darker aspects of being a sexually-attractive woman in the public eye, while others preferred not to. Most of Lara Allen's interviewees, for instance, did not wish occurrences of sexual harassment to be discussed in the public domain. Patty Masuku (Nokwe) and Lynette Leeuw, however, spoke about their experiences at length, and wished their stories to be told: 'both as a personal catharsis', writes Allen, 'and in order to break the conspiracy of silence that so often surrounds such issues.' Allen tells Masuku's story:

> As a young woman Patty endured several episodes of serious harassment by a choirmaster, a radio announcer and a manager/accompanist. Gradually she acquired the reputation of being 'a hard nut to crack' and the pressure reduced, although as a mature married woman she was still occasionally approached. Patty's experiences were typical of those encountered by female singers in that she faced the most pressure as a very young woman before she had gained the experience and confidence to deal with it, and that the *quid pro quo* 'offers' were related to career opportunities. (Allen 2000: 230)

Allen explains how saxophonist Lynette Leeuw, one of the first female instrumentalists struggling to function in a male domain, endured additional pressures:

> Besides harassment from audiences, including the suggestions that she was either faking her playing or was not a 'real' woman, Lynette had to fend off constant solicitations from male colleagues. Promoters complained when she insisted that separate accommodation be arranged for her when they were on tour, although this did not prevent fellow band members from trying to force themselves on her. Lynette believes that male musicians felt threatened by her, and that their efforts to have sex with her were an attempt to reassert their domination and authority. 'I always asked myself – what is this that they think they can get from me? Maybe it's only then they'll feel they are man enough. Because if they don't get that from me then they always think – this one, she thinks she's better.' One of the most difficult problems Lynette encountered was her position outside the network of informal

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the Witwatersrand area. The culture of these *tsotsi* gangs involved the assertion of male superiority and power over young women, generally called 'molls', who were chosen as trophy girlfriends, often by force (Glaser in Allen 2000: 86, 88, 90, 92-93; Glaser in Ballantine 2012: 168-169).

> teaching and skills-sharing amongst male musicians. Victor Ndlazilwana, who taught Lynette the rudiments of music theory, was virtually the only male musician who helped her without the expectation of recompense in the form of sexual favours. Denied the opportunity of formal music education, Lynette believes that having a male musician as a husband or a friend would have significantly enhanced her career. She might have been able to learn from him, and would have enjoyed his protection and patronage, especially if they had played in the same band. With hindsight Lynette suggests that to attempt to be a saxophonist without male support was, in her era at least, extremely difficult. (ibid.)

Similarly, jazz journalist and author of *Soweto Blues: Jazz, Popular Music and Politics in South Africa*, Gwen Ansell, spoke to me of how the women musicians she interviewed were either closed or open in discussing the sexual harassment that went on in the 1950s. She cited Thandi Klaasen as being the most open about it happening, and directed me to the passage in her book where she quotes Klaasen on Kippie Moeketsi:

> Kippie? *Die was my bra!* [That was my brother.] He taught me. … We used to meet at the BMSC and he'd say, 'I would like you to sing this song, like maybe 'Stella by Starlight'. And he'd say, 'O bina ka E flat ['Sing in E flat']. E flat? I didn't know what that was! Then he'd say, 'Hey man, Thandi! E flat!' and he'd go to the piano and sound a note – ting! Then he sings [the lyrics]. He taught me all those keys! … He knew I was a good jazz singer, and he'd also say to other people, 'Teach Thandi this tune' or 'Listen to how Thandi's singing this tune.' And, with respect, he was not one of those who would say: come to me at lunchtime and I will make you a star, because they want to have sex with you. … There's some of the white people – and some of the brothers here – who's want to use you for that. But he was just really concerned for me to do my best. (Ansell 2004: 122)

Klaasen's statement is reminiscent of Leeuw's about Ndlazilwana. Clearly there was an issue for these women with regard to finding musicians to teach them who would not have ulterior motives. Ansell spoke of how explicit Thandi Klaasen was in talking about sexual harassment: 'A lot of other women talk *round* it. She just came straight out with it' (Int. 2007). Sensitive to such dynamics as race and trust brought to bear in interview situations, Ansell explained that on the other hand, some women refused to ever discuss intimate personal experience like harassment with her. Abigail Khubeka, for instance, said to Ansell: 'thank goodness, I don't remember any of it' (ibid.). Ansell interprets Khubeka's response as basically saying: 'keep your paws off that area of my life' (ibid.).

I had expected to find that working conditions for the women I interviewed would be easier than for the pioneering generation of black women musicians that Allen and Ansell spoke to. Yet some tensions seem the same. *Quid pro quo* still exists, as evidenced by jazz singer Wendy Twyford:

> I think that a lot of women are taken advantage of in the context of musical circles. I've been lucky in that most of the people I work with have a lot of integrity and they would not take advantage of the female dynamic of it. But I have had an opportunity, a situation where a guy – I went to get some work with him doing jingle work in his studio, and he promised the world. He was absolutely taken with the voice, and wanted to take it beyond that and record, and wanted to create opportunity, and then as the thing developed, there were conditions that were attached to it. And almost like: 'didn't

> you expect this? That you would have to sleep with me to fund your album; to get the conditions you require?' I was devastated! (Int. 2006)

Twyford described how she agonized about this 'couch audition' (my term for this incident, not Twyford's):

> It was almost like a rape victim: you get raped and then you blame yourself or something ridiculous when it's just wrong! You got raped! And I actually only chatted to people about it in the last 3 or 4 years. I almost blamed myself for being so naïve and stupid. I was embarrassed. (ibid.)

It was when the same man tried the same thing with two other women in the music industry whom she knew, that she decided to speak out, 'because I didn't want it to happen to them.' She explains:

> I didn't want to ruin any opportunities for them, but at the same time I didn't want them to find themselves in the same position. And it was actually liberating, because finally I could actually talk about it, and not feel like I was such an idiot. But that happens a lot … there are some really scaly guys out there who think they can just take advantage of naïve, willing girls who want to make a go of their careers and are looking for any opportunity. (ibid.)

Twyford firmly believes that women are really vulnerable in the South African music industry, because they are 'outnumbered, particularly in jazz. Invariable it's the singers that are female, and very rarely do you find female instrumentalists that are playing' (ibid.).

Celeste Ribeiro identified one of the worries for a young woman confronted with a male bandleader or producer or other role-of-power: it is, simply stated, that 'you also don't want to lose your job!' She described how the drummer of a band of which she was the lead singer for in her matric year, sexually harassed her:

> He was about twenty-four and … the guy that put the band together, but I think he always thought he was going to score with me…He tried several times. Very charming guy and he won my parents over me, but I'd say: 'Ooh, but you don't know what that guy tried to do to me!' and I actually had to end it. The way I did it was to start seeing someone who was in the proximity of where we were working at a pub every weekend. So I started seeing a young guy, well younger than me - and he actually just left the band. He was humiliated that I had rejected him, and he just left the band. But if I look back at it now, I can see the context of it; I can see the pattern. There was always a pattern, you know. (Int. 2006)

Lipalesa Lebabo spoke candidly of a band she had to leave. An important break in her early career, she was invited to join the band of a famous musician (a man whose career has had longevity in South Africa). Yet he wanted to have sex with her and when she said no, the musical relationship ended (Int. 2006).

Although I excluded classical music from the boundaries of my research domain, I include here mention of an incidence of sexual harassment by a musician in a position of power over another (*quid pro quo*), Elena Zlatkova, which took place in the context of a classical music setting:

> When I was working in the female chamber orchestra, we had a male conductor, and that was a very, very strange story. He was depping [deputizing] on a concert in tour and he knocked on my door, and I had to call my colleague. He was married; my teacher was his colleague! And you just have to decide: are you going to lose the job, or what? … It's still happening. I'm not going to give you names, but it is still happening. (Int. 2007)

Others of my interviewees did not report experiences of sexual harassment or even tension. Cathy del Mei, for instance told me: 'I can honestly say in all my time of doing "corporates" on my own – setting up and playing on my own – I can honestly count on my one hand the times I've really been hit on' (Int. 2006).

The discussion above is not broad enough to properly assess sexual harassment in all sectors of the South African music industry: I will, however, speculate that I suspect del Mei and some of the other women interviewed have escaped such experiences not because of their race (being white) or luck (being in the wrong place at the wrong time), but because of the genre within which they work. The women who divulged darker experiences were invariably working in jazz or popular bands focused on 'original' musical material. The settings of their music-making made them that much more vulnerable, because they were alone with men, on the road touring with only male colleagues or working in settings like clubs where audience members were drunk or under the influence of drugs. In the setting of the corporate function where del Mei largely works, male audience members may be drunk and be unaccompanied by their wives, but they are in the company of their colleagues and often superiors, a factor which would presumably keep most bad behaviour in check.

Kristel Birkholtz had a peculiar tale to tell about working in a band that played at Jewish functions. She described the orthodox Jewish community as 'very touchy about a women performing a musical instrument or singing, especially singing.' The band only occasionally used a Jewish female singer for less orthodox functions, and she was the only female instrumentalist. Birkholtz (Int. 2010) explained that 'on several occasions, Jonathan [the bandleader] had to ask the Rabbi for special permission for me to play with the band—and I have played behind a curtain. I have!' Birkholtz was quick to qualify that she respected Jewish culture and had no wish to dispel it with her presence as a musician. She described too how at first she thought playing in this 'environment created a safe space for me—coming from other situations' (ibid.). She was expected to wear dresses—no trousers allowed—and to cover her ankles and elbows, none of which bothered her. Also, she could improvise and play *klezmer* which she enjoyed. Initially she was told she could play, but

only once the Rabbi had left, which did not upset her. 'Initially I thought this could be a safe space' Birkholtz explained, 'I'm with others, I get to try a new musical idiom, but I was very wrong!' (ibid.)

Birkholtz then told me of the one experience that really soured her participation in this band: 'the closest I got to [experiencing] sexual harassment' (ibid.). She prefaced her story by explaining that the band members with whom she was performing when this incident happened were all male.[66] 'Women may perform at *barmiztvahs* but not orthodox weddings, and so permission had been asked for me to perform' (ibid.).[67] Birkholtz described how at this particular orthodox function, as at others, women and men were separated in the room and sitting at different tables. The organizers put the band table in the corner of the men's side of the room:

> I asked Jonathan: is it ok to sit there and eat? He said, no it's fine. For me it was a problem. As I was walking—I realize that as a gentile woman they have no respect for you—alone to the table among Hasidic men, I got pretty much hit on and insulted the whole way, until one actually said: why don't you come and sit on my lap and give us a little dance? I was really insulted and said: 'I'm just moving on, and that is not appropriate.' But it was a couple of them. I felt very uncomfortable. (ibid.)

It was the bandleader's unwillingness to acknowledge the discomfort caused to Birkholtz, however, that she found so lacking:

> The only person I could speak to was Jonathan and his response was: 'ag [oh], it's fine, don't really worry about it.' But it isn't fine, it actually isn't. I can handle it, but I shouldn't have to. It wasn't the safe space I thought it was, and as an outsider to their culture, I actually had no value and that was probably why – as an outsider – I was allowed to be there, which was quite *jik* [unpleasant] to be honest. I suppose for me, I then started turning down work from Jonathan. I thought if you have no respect for me as a performer, it's just not going to work. (ibid.)

She concluded that she was at least in a position of being able to move away from an unsatisfactory working environment such as this, but was aware other women might not be in such a fortunate position:

> I suppose I was in a position where it wasn't my only source of income, whereas for other people who have similar experiences and it is your only source of income, you are kind of forced to suck it up, you know? I suppose there is that lack of respect from the people who work with you. (Int. 2010)

That contemporary women musicians have experienced sexual harassment, rape or sexism brings into question whether South Africa's progressive legislation and constitutional attempts to eradicate marginalisation in institutional, corporate, industrial and social settings,

[66] Birkholtz elsewhere remarked with amusement that the saxophonist 'flirting with me was another whole messed up, misogynist dynamic in the band' (Int. 2010).
[67] Birkholtz commented that at the less orthodox functions, a female vocalist was often hired too, and said 'it is much nicer when she is there' (Int. 2010).

has filtered through to women's lived experiences.[68] From this two issues arise. Firstly, since this is a case of lack of awareness, how is information and warning to be disseminated? Secondly, how is help to be obtained when required?

When I discussed sexual harassment within the music industry and the difficulties of writing about it with Gwen Ansell, her response was poignant and insightful:

> Look, there's harassment ... Unfortunately I think that's just something we live with. But what I'm curious about in terms of music is that it's a hell of a good story, and no one is writing it. Even if you don't actually give people names, it's a really interesting story to explore how women handle that. And how do women in the music industry handle the dangers? How do women handle the dangers of travelling home, not two nights from a festival, but every night? You're a bar lady at Kippies or something; you're in a dangerous job, how do you handle that? Does your employer give you any support? You're coming home into the township at two o'clock in the morning, don't tell me that ain't dangerous! Does your employer give you a cab [fare]? No, I bet he doesn't. So women in music, it's also other things, it's not just performance, and I think there are stories we are not writing. There are invisibilities, there are erasures, there are exclusions. (Int. 2007)

The male protector

Given the descriptions by women of their experiences, including incidents of sexual harassment and rape, is the social solution of a male protector valid? So often in social history a male protector has been regarded as able to keep women safe from harm, to buffer them from harassment of various kinds. For women musicians, this role was filled by kindly, protective male colleagues, often another member of the band. Claire Johnston, reflected on being a woman in the music industry and on her time as lead singer of Mango Groove:

> You [as a woman musician] are much more vulnerable. You're much more prone to all sorts of things. I mean, if I think of how lucky I was when I was in the music industry at seventeen, there's nothing really bad that ever happened. I mean all sorts of comments were made, but anyone I have

[68] Labour lawyer, Peter Strassheim, advised me on which Acts to investigate (Strassheim 2012). This legislation is documented in Chapter One. He stated that in the event of misconduct in the workplace, a victim would have to prove a contract (whether fixed term, a temporary contract, full-time or part-time), which should be easy to do even in the absence of a written contract since work could be proved (and rather easily and publicly in the case of a musician). All contracts (written or verbal) are covered by either the Basic Conditions of Employment Act or the Labour Relations Act and, in particular, by the Codes of Good Practice stated therein. Furthermore, the Equality Act is in existence to prevent any form of discrimination, for example on the basis of sex, gender, race or age. If a woman, having reported a case of sexual harassment or rape, is told by the police that the docket is 'lost', she should report the lost docket to the Police Inspectorate for the Area. He also suggests she could lay a complaint with the Independent Complaints Department. Legal rights are in fact entirely protected by legislation (whether on a corporate function stage, in a dingy jazz club or on a tour bus), and legal recourse *is* available to women who suffer sexual harassment or rape to persecute the perpetrators of these crimes. In the event of a woman not having money for a lawyer, there is legal advice in Johannesburg available at institutions from People Against Women Abuse, the Law Clinic of the University of the Witwatersrand, the Johannesburg University Law Clinic, the Legal Aid Board, the Socio-Economic Rights Institute and Pro Bono, as listed with contact numbers on the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development's website ('Self-help Guidelines…' online).

> worked with has generally shown me respect, and I have been exceptionally lucky that way. I do think that John and the other guys in the band provided me with some sort of a buffer, some sort of safety net. (Int. 2006)

With remarkable frankness, she reflected on some youthful moments with the band when the older male members looked out for her:

> For a while I really was one of the boys, and I got horribly, horribly drunk… I was probably about nineteen, and I think I had about fourteen shots of Tequila, and I was impossible. I had John protecting me, and I was turning to the next table and I was making eyes at one of the men at the next table, and if I hadn't had people with me to look after me I don't know what would have happened. But I remember being taken to … well, I don't remember being taken to the hotel, but apparently I was put into the car, and I tried to get out while it was moving. Then they get me to the hotel, and prop me up against the wall, and I was sliding down, and trying to open my door while I was crawling along the passage and banging on people's doors! So John and Alan basically put me into my own bed, and wiped up my vomit! … I was very protected! It was really special. (ibid.)

Franka Insinger described her *Sankomota* band mate Sello Montwedi thus:

> Sello and I were the only non-alcoholics at that stage. He's drinking now, but he wasn't before. He was smoking at the time, but not drinking. He and I were like brother and sister. He sort of protected me a bit. While the others were getting drunk at the bar, we would be sitting having tea and eating Zoo biscuits. I very much needed him around. (Int. 2006)

Celeste Ribeiro described how in her early music making days:

> …the band looked after me, and didn't exploit me, I was fortunate enough. I think there was an underlying current where maybe one of them would have wanted to, and they used to make comments all the time: 'Ah, come home with me tonight, Celeste' but they never actually did, and there was always someone in the band who would say: 'lay off her!' In the two bands, well in the first band, it was the bandleader who brought me in, and he made it very clear to everyone. Even when we did gigs, he would put an end to it. I mean he would make jokes all the time about me being a virgin, and he even did it on stage. If he did it to me now, he would get a slap, but I tolerated it then because I was so young. Band guys in those days were quite foul-mouthed; it was all a joke. I think they did at the expense of women, but it was a totally different time in the mid-eighties. It was a totally different time. The whole political correctness thing wasn't in play, and I think that girls in bands were seen as sluts generally. It was their way of telling everyone I wasn't a slut, and it was almost a selling point for the band: me being this innocent, virgin girl was almost like this is something special that we've got here. (Int. 2006)

She said in reflection of this dynamic: 'it's not that I was interested or encouraging it, but it was difficult for me, because they were the leaders of the band, and I was still young and I had to prove myself. If I didn't have that guy stepping in, I'm not sure where it would have gone to. Perhaps I would have felt obliged. I don't know how I would have handled it' (ibid.).

Ribeiro was one of the most frank and forthcoming women I spoke to on the issue of sexual harassment. She also told me of an experience when she worked with Steve Hofmeyer. Ribeiro described how Louis van Wyk, Hofmeyer's manager at that time, repeatedly made passes at her. Van Wyk was later convicted of sexual harassment and rape. Ribeiro feels she escaped worse sexual harassment or rape because van Wyk was scared of her muscular

boyfriend at the time who worked as a Karate instructor and club bouncer. She described van Wyk thus: 'He has the worst reputation for women in this industry, but the women actually go for it, because he's a big time manager, and he can actually do something for you, big time' (ibid.).[69]

Other women spoke not of a regular male protector, but of moments of experiencing male protection. Cathy del Mei, for instance, emphatically said: 'I've never felt worried. I've never felt concern for myself or for my safety, never, never, never' (Int. 2006). She went on to elaborate how this was the case 'even the one time' when she flew to George and then caught a train with thirty men, one of two women (the other the female event organizer), to play for a function on a remote beach. 'On the train they got quite …[she doesn't elaborate and pauses] yet this one guy sat next to me and I felt protected. By the end of the night they were all quite protective over me, and if one or two were offensive another would say: "Oh just ignore him!" They were quite protective. It's interesting' she said (ibid.).

This idea of the male protector to the woman musician is not new. Lara Allen described how concerned parents often only allowed their daughters to participate in professional music-making when accompanied by a male relative, or a trusted male authority figure such as a teacher (Allen 2000: 212). As I have described before, music as a profession had a negative stigma in the urban black culture of Johannesburg in the 1950s. Prior to the 1950s, women's 'sexuality was not overtly advertised in either their stage attire or their choreography, and they usually remained within the vicinity of male band members, family members or friends who protected them from the advances of other men' (Allen 2000: 228). Being claimed, or spoken for, by a man within the music industry was one of the most effective ways of avoiding sexual harassment, particularly if the protector was relatively powerful (ibid.: 231). Mary Rabotapi, for instance, was safeguarded by her marriage to producer Sam Alcock, whilst Queenth Ndaba remained under the protection of her uncle, bandleader Zacks Nkosi. 'In the process of seeking such male patronage, however', writes Allen, 'young women made themselves particularly vulnerable to *quid pro quo* sexual abuse' (ibid.).

Allen concluded that the general consensus amongst women musicians who discussed the issue of sexual harassment with her, is that the only effective method of remaining

[69] I do not conceal Ribeiro and van Wyk's names here (as I have done over other sensitive examples elsewhere), because Ribeiro did not speak 'off the record'; more importantly, this story of sexual harassment is already in the public sphere.

untroubled by it (avoiding it completely is impossible) is to develop self confidence and a strong sense of one's own power and talent (ibid.). Such an approach was easy for the top female stars of the 1950s, for they achieved so much on the strength of their artistic talent so early in their careers that they were not vulnerable to *quid pro quo* propositions. Of less famous women musicians, however, Allen writes that they:

> …sometimes expressed the nagging doubt that had they indulged certain gatekeepers, their careers might have been more successful. Conversely, women given opportunities their colleagues believed their talent did not merit are suspected of sleeping with the men controlling such opportunities, although such suspicions are more common in the 1990s than they had been during the 1950s and 1960s (Dlamini, Int.). (Allen 2000: 231-2)

There are a few points here salient to my research: fewer high profile women in the music industry would be at risk in terms of sexual harassment; careers may be boosted or impeded by this insidious practice (which women battle to talk about publically); men control opportunities (in their roles as bandleaders, producers, Artist and Repertoire executives and so on)[70]; lastly, Allen's reference to the 1990s (echoed by the experience of Lebabo, Ribeiro and Twyford) reveals that these issues are not only a phenomenon of the past. *Quid pro quo* harassment does still exist in the music industry.

Gwen Ansell speaks openly of sexual harassment having existed previously in the music industry and *still existing* in contemporary South Africa, and the difficulties of talking about it (Int. 2007). She speaks from a somewhat different perspective than my other respondents: namely, she is a music critic and writer. As a non-musician, she is not concerned about losing work nor performance opportunities by daring to speak uncomfortable truths. While not drawn in by a romantic notion of sisterhood (which she describes as 'exceedingly dangerous' (ibid.)), she is a self-confessed feminist (an identity most of my interviewees shied away from), and was willing to talk bluntly.

An interesting question to ask, then, is: how do women deal with sexual harassment when it does happen? One strategy, like Ribeiro's, is to have a protective boyfriend or husband. There is resonance here with Allen's explanation that some women found advantage in being a 'moll' (girlfriend). Dolly Rathebe, for instance, 'saw herself as a beautiful, highly sexual and prestigious moll' (Allen 2000: 93). Allen describes the paradox in this strategy: female artists 'defuse their vulnerability' by embracing 'their public personae as sexual icons' in

[70] Artist and Repertoire (A & R) executives are the managers in record companies who sign performers/artists. 'The A & R department is the most important in the marketing process—especially in the area of product development' (Shaw 2007: 221).

order to exert more control over the public consumption of their sexuality, thus consciously fulfilling roles strongly dependent on their appearance (2000: 231-2). There is a hint of this strategy in Cathy del Mei's attitude described above.

However, the idea of seeking male support constantly is hardly a satisfactory solution for each woman on each occasion. In the stories above a male protector has sometimes been available fortuitously, on other occasions a relationship allows for suitable protection, but neither is a permanent solution to the threat of assault. Surely such solutions only reinforce the status quo of patriarchal domination and female weakness, of male aggression and female fear? It is important too that such cases of sexual harassment should be exposed in public knowledge rather than hushed up so that criminal selfishness can be exposed in order to change such negative patriarchal attitudes and practice. Legal co-operation should be an important factor in achieving this. Further it is important that male journalists should be made aware of how they reinforce attitudes which can lead to such unacceptable practices. The ultimate solution is to achieve a society in which each person's human rights are not disregarded, so that each person—female or male—can claim personal safety, individual respect and dignity from every other person.

Conclusion

My research revealed that while many young women are encouraged in their music-making as children, many parents still express concern on the choice of music as a career. This is not, however, nearly as vehement as the sort of opposition young black South African women contended with in the 1950s when aspiring to musical careers (Allen 2000; Molefe and Mzileni 1997).

The women musicians I interviewed spoke of seminal relationships in their personal and professional lives and the impact of these relationships on their music-making. Some women benefit from understanding partners—often themselves working in the music industry—who are sympathetic to the personal demands of a musical career, such as childcare issues and working at night. Some male partners understand that women with stage careers will gather attention from audiences and the media, and are not jealous of this. Yet some men are more threatened by such attention and this can lead to distrust and resistance. Other important

relationships for these women included those with music teachers and music colleagues, whether positively supportive, negatively challenging or sexually charged. In addition women spoke strongly about the pull of home commitments and how being mothers, especially, change their management of their careers.

My research also reveals that one of the greatest gender constraints to a career in music for a woman is sexual harassment – and at the darkest end of its spectrum, rape; these are topics about which a surprising number of women spoke. However, speaking on the public record about such experiences was a daunting and unappealing thought for many who preferred to speak confidentially to me about these issues. As researcher, I witnessed the relief and release that some of these women expressed in talking about experiences which for the most part they kept private; at other times anger and disappointment were clearly felt. I sensed that for some women, my listening providing a safe space for them to talk about difficult experiences.

It emerged from my interviews too that some women were more prepared to engage with difficult issues and to expose experiences from their own lives, often quite challenging and intimate, and also that some women were more articulate and self-reflective. In the next chapter on identity I shall consider how these women perceived themselves. In addition I shall consider some issues, evidently at play, which were not openly raised in interviews.

CHAPTER THREE
IDENTITY

'It's funny, you know: thinking that I'm a musician. I still struggle to think of myself as a musician, although I am.'
—FRANKA INSINGER (Int. 2006)

'That's about more than music, isn't it?'
—CLAIRE JOHNSTON (Int. 2006)

'I always say I didn't choose music, it chose me. I didn't want to study music; I was going to study medicine. I wasn't supposed to be a musician, I've always said! And it took me a long time to accept the fact that I am a musician, one hundred percent. I can't be anything else.'
—SHANNON MOWDAY (Int. 2007)

'Becoming what one is is a creative act comparable with creating a work of art'
—ANTHONY STORR (in Hall and du Gay 1996: 108)

Linda Alcoff states that 'identity [is] a construction yet also a necessary point of departure' (in Kolmar and Bartkowski 2005: 434). The quotations above from three of my respondents suggest surprise, inadequacy and modesty about 'being a musician'; each women has to re-construct her sense of self (Linda Alcoff's implications) in relation to the ideal concept of 'being a musician' that her education, ability, professional experience has led her to envisage. Anthony Storr's statement not only describes this process of identity construction as one of 'becoming' oneself, but as an act of creativity. This presents a clear analogy: people create selves as artists create art. So the issue of identity in this chapter is that of a personal development within musical experience—leading to the realization that 'I am a musician'—and this chapter includes various facets of this experience generated by different social and personal pressures. I have, therefore, chosen a series of themes that emerged from my interviews, which at the same time present my respondents' differences of attitude and experience.

Introduction

In Chapter One I described the methodological approach of my interviews: while there were general areas to cover and questions to ask, I approached each interview as a conversation that could change direction or follow impromptu issues as they arose. In certain instances, and strikingly in a few, the conversation took an unlikely turn directed by my respondent. Often I felt disappointed that the issues I was hoping women would speak about were not articulated, or that questions I had asked were either diffused, avoided altogether or not fully answered. I came to realize, however, as I listened again to these conversations, that it was often in these circumstances that the most interesting, and sometimes unexpected, issues arose. I was heartened to recognize this process described in Belinda Bozzoli's *Women of Phokeng*:

> The consciousness of the interviewees is most often revealed, here, where they are not necessarily being 'led' by Mmantho, but when they make unsolicited or seemingly irrelevant statements, in the 'wrong' chronological order, about matters they consider to be important. Often it is what is spontaneous about the interviews that is most revealing. (1991: 10)

In each of my interviews, the woman's narrative was constructed from her descriptions of her experiences in music, grounded in the specific working conditions, musical roles and genres within a broad music industry, and from her perceptions of her personal history and career. From these personal spoken narratives, I have constructed a broader written overview of experiences and concerns that have affected the working lives of all these women—an account that I hope is inclusive and sensitive, attuned to recognizing and giving space to difference.

Herein emerges a thorny theoretical problem. As I reflected on the individual and social identities of self, place and culture that were revealed through these women's testimonies, and looked for emergent themes to thread my narrative from their collective experience, two perspectives arose: repeated and reiterated areas of common experience, and yet at the same time, glaring differences. Initially, when looking at the 'what actually happened' aspects of these women's lives (as related during my interviews), one narrative of a shared set of experiences (with certain exceptions) emerged which describes the various aspects of their lives. Here my interviewees reflected about themselves and others, assessed their education, aspirations, achievements and circumstances, each showing much of their own construction of identity and experience. Despite these women's social differences (race, education level,

musical genre, age, sexuality and so on), themes revealed themselves far more through repetition, than in contrast. On further consideration of these accounts, however, it is this very aspect of my narrative that raises the theoretical problem: the use of the gender term 'woman' as the common denominator in my selection of women across ages, races, ability levels, musical genres and different performance streams of music within a ghettoised local music industry. Framed by an awareness of the different trajectories of feminism, my project then is reduced from a broad spectrum of different identities and experiences into a singular category of 'woman' – what theorists would refer to as essentialism at work. There could be a danger of failing to dispel what Bozzoli describes as 'a common myth of some practitioners of women's studies that gender, as a category of analysis, can stand on its own' (1991: 241).

For a moment it is worth considering the two academic disciplines within which my project most easily sits: popular music studies and ethnomusicology. Grounded not in musicology but in cultural studies (which is in turn deeply influenced as a discipline by postmodernist perspectives of the relationship between knowledge and power, by post-structuralist theories of deconstruction and by contemporary feminism's anti-essentialist concerns), writers of popular music studies are well versed in reading identities against the grain. They often closely question the relationships between identity, power and knowledge so affected by class, race and historical location. This is evident, for instance, in British subcultural theory (Frith 1996: 4; Middleton 1990: 155). Contemporary ethnomusicologists too, particularly influenced by new musicology and post-colonial theory, consider the influence of race and cultural location while examining the relationship between 'music's *formal* and social functions', to borrow Simon Frith's phrase (1996: 120; Qureshi in Cook and Everist 1999: 317; Moisala and Diamond 2000: 3 and 5; Middleton 1990: 146). Framed by these fields, then, it should be possible to approach this project which focuses on women musicians with an awareness of the dangers of essentialism.

Race and cultural location are then important aspects of the differences and similarities of my interviewees' experiences of identity and this is further complicated in the South African context by the implications of the racial grouping of my twenty-eight women musicians. Always uncomfortable if inevitable in the South African context, discussion of racial awareness seems compounded by the fact that I interviewed more white women (twenty-one) than black women (seven), and no-one Coloured, or of Indian or Asian descent (in a

sample of twenty-eight women).[72] So not only is my focus on gender questionable, but the prevalence of white women in my sample may appear problematic.[73] In South Africa, it is imprudent to talk of a feminism that does not take account of the racial oppression, under colonialism and then apartheid, experienced by Black, Indian and Coloured women which sets their consciousness and historical, political, social and economic circumstances before 1994 apart from that of white South African women.[74] As Hassim articulates:

> Although some women's movements, and some forms of feminism, have identified as their common interest the elimination of patriarchy (understood as the system of male domination), in many postcolonial countries the notion of patriarchy has been unhelpful as it fails to account for the particular intersections of class, race, and colonial forms of domination with the oppression of women. Postcolonial feminists have criticized the emphasis on patriarchy and on the sameness of women's interests for reflecting an ethnocentric and middle-class bias that privileged the Western model of women's political struggles as the standard by which to judge all other women's political strategies. As Mohanty and other postcolonial scholars have argued, feminism and the ideological content of feminist consciousness should not be specified a priori according to the abstract definitions of universalist theory but should be defined in the context of particular social formations and should have resonance in the historical experience and political culture of specific societies. (Hassim 2006: 5)[75]

It is important to state that the racial profile of my sample is not intended to prioritise the voice of white women musicians, nor to ignore Hassim's valuable statement. The reason is that a large proportion of the women I chose to interview are instrumentalists, and the majority of female instrumentalists in the South African music industry are white. Had I interviewed predominantly singers, the number of white women in the sample would have diminished, for many more black singers than instrumentalists are performing and recording music in the South African music industry. Browsing through the local music selections of any CD shop reveals the high public profile of such black female singers: as David Coplan points out, female vocalists in fact dominate the scene (2008: 347; author's interview with Bentlage 2006).

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[72] The terms Coloured (mixed race) and Indian (South Africans of Indian descent) are used here in the manner in which South Africans were divided historically into four racial groups: White, Black, Coloured and Indian. These terms continue to dominate current popular and academic discourse, although 'Indian' is now replaced with 'Asian' (Davenport and Saunders 2000: 428). These terms are understood as 'social and historical constructions, which belie a uniquely South African identity' (Jorritsma 2011, 'Author's Note', n.p.).

[73] No studies identify a racial breakdown of musicians professionally active in Gauteng or South Africa at large. The racial breakdown of the population from the 2011 census is: 79.2% Black; 8.9% Coloured; 2.5% Indian or Asian; 8.9% White, and 0.5% Other (Lehohla 2011: 26).

[74] Indeed, the enfranchisement of white women in 1930 in South Africa 'was a victory predicated on racial domination' and formed part of the ruling National party's larger strategy to attain uncontested white supremacy in parliament (Walker 1990: 313). 'Sex loyalty', writes Cherryl Walker in her discussion of the women's suffrage movement in South Africa, 'stopped at the heavily guarded boundaries of white privilege' (ibid.: 314).

[75] Here Hassim footnotes Mohanty (1991) and Basu (1995).

Lucy Green's highly regarded study of the learning practices of popular musicians in England was based on interviews with fourteen musicians: 'they were all white, and comprised twelve males and two females' (2002:11-12). Green acknowledges that her own 'social class, gender, ethnicity, geographical location and so on affected the sampling.' She explains that her sample would be different if she was black or had sought musicians through a 'black music network', or 'women's music network' (ibid.: 12). In contemporary Britain, this brief explanation of the racial profile of an ethnographical sample is acceptable (if qualified). In South Africa, singular reference to race in the preface of a study would certainly be questionable. While the fact that I am an educated, white South African woman no doubt influenced the dynamic in interviews, this 'affected the sampling' (to reflect Green's statement above) less than the racial breakdown might suggest. I argue that the fact that there are fewer black female than white female instrumentalists working professionally in popular music is worth exploring. Furthermore, I argue that the diversities in identity awareness of the women I interviewed reveal some interesting perspectives that may contribute to our knowledge about music-making in South Africa, and indeed reflect some of the broader perspectives on identity in South Africa.

Framed by the difficult issue of how to define women's interests in the face of the entanglement of feminism, race and nationalism in South Africa, I continue with exploring facets of identity through my interviewees' comments on their identity as musicians and as individuals, within the context of gender. In this chapter, I consider aspects of what constitutes and constructs the identity of each of these women. What did they have to say about the aspects of their identities from various points of view, as influenced at times by their gender? Of vital significance in this chapter too (unlike the preceding and following chapters), is what my interviewees did *not* say, as opposed to what they did say.

In her discussion of female self-representation in autobiography, Alison Easton explores how women 'face gender-specific problems and influences when setting out to write their life' (Cosslett et al 1996: 105). She is careful to introduce her argument with the idea that although an autobiography may appear to give direct access to the real story of an author, 'there is a vital difference between experience as it is lived and the textual representation of that experience' (ibid.: 104). The act of writing the story of one's life is riddled with choices such as who the readership will be, what the purpose of writing is, what stages of a life to

include and whether to present these in chronological order or not, and importantly, *what to include and what to leave out*.

Similarly, I would argue that the act of *speaking* the story of one's life also involves decisions about what to include or leave out. Further, to a far greater extent than when writing one's story, the act of speaking one's story is influenced by *who is listening*. Ethnographers, whether working in the field of sociology or ethnomusicology, are poignantly aware of the influence that the researcher's 'insider' or 'outsider' status brings into play in an interview (Bozzoli 1991: 8-10). Factors such as age, race, gender and language contribute vitally to the comfort and trust an interviewee will feel in the interview and his or her decision to impart information or not. As just explained above, what interviewees chose to include or leave out may reveal the dynamic between interviewee and interviewer. Further, areas of consciousness which some women concealed or avoided sharing may also offer poignant insight into the difficult relationship between, for example, race and identity, and sexuality and identity.

Consciousness and identity

Race and identity

I did not ask my interviewees specific questions about their race or how it may have affected their career, nor did I seek out more general comments about political awareness or race relations in South Africa.[76] Nonetheless, mention of race, was made in the course of the interviews, in the contexts that follow. First, a few general comments can be made: young women, black and white, tended not to dwell on race; the majority of white women that I spoke to either veered away from overt discussions of race, or spoke of it in a brief, uncomplicated fashion (with a few exceptions); it was the more mature women who spoke more comfortably or openly about race.

Of the twenty-eight women in all that I interviewed, there were six 'young' women. Four are black and two are white, and four were twenty-five years of age or younger at the time of the

[76] I did mention race in the context of asking women if they could help me to identify black female instrumentalists.

interview. None were preoccupied by issues of race, and mentioned it solely in the context of different musical genres and styles, often delineated along racial lines (such as Afro-pop, soul and *kwaito*). Most spoke of their broad-ranging musical influences and tastes. Ayanda Nhlangothi, for instance, comments: 'I give music a chance! But I get something back, it gives something to me, that's why I have many musical influences. Evanescence had an influence on me, and it's rock! But I think I was born to open myself up to music, and because of that it has influenced me in great ways, so I have *lots* of influences' (Int. 2006). She also commented, somewhat incredulously, that when she was a participant in Idols, she was both delighted and surprised to realize that 'afterwards I had fans, and my fans are white!' (ibid.)

In the final year of her university degree in musical theatre at the time of our interview in 2007, Nkoto Malebye was the youngest woman I interviewed. Although young, she was highly articulate about her frustration at the paucity of black people in musical theatre, South African or otherwise, included in her university course. 'Where are the South African women? … Where *are* the black American musical theatre people, you know what I mean?' In the second year of her degree she started on some self-motivated research to discover the history she felt missing from her course. With delight, she read about Ethel Walters, Phillipa Schyler and 'black musicals like *Cabin in the Sky*.' 'Music is music', she comments, 'so you can relate to Judy Garland, but I'd like to see someone *I* can relate to. I did my research and I found out there are so many people!' She spoke of wishing to write a book about this subject as a future aspiration, but also of having 'opened her mind' to learn about the valuable contributions of white writers and performers too. When *Sweet Charity* was the chosen musical production at TUT in her third year, she saw 'no room for me' in it. Thus she dared to audition instead for a professional production at the Market Theatre in Johannesburg, directed by Malcolm Purkey, and landed a lead part in *Ain't Misbehavin'*, the popular, well-crafted musical revue about Thomas 'Fats' Waller.[77] When I asked her about her future aspirations, Malebye answered: 'To be the first black person to get my degree in musical theatre in South Africa' (Int. 2007). She mentioned that a 'black friend' of hers was composing a musical in Cape Town, and that they will be among the first degreed black people in this genre. To Malebye, her race is a vital and positive aspect of her identity.

[77] I played saxophone in this production, and witnessed Nkoto play to appreciative audiences and obtain good reviews for the run of the production.

Other women spoke less of race as an aspect of their identity, but rather as part of their working experience in the context of who gets hired, particularly in the musical theatre and the corporate function scenes. Women are often hired in preference to men; black rather than white musicians are sometimes deliberately hired, and very often the event organisers will make sure there is at least black representation amongst the musicians, even if they are not in the majority (Bentlage Int. 2006; del Mei Int. 2006; O'Hanlan Int. 2006; Birkholtz Int. 2010; Mhlongo Int. 2010). Some white women spoke of situations of working with black musicians (male and female) in which the (stereotypical) issues of time management (arriving late for gigs), not being reliable (missing rehearsals and even gigs) and transport (getting to gigs and rehearsals) were of issue, although mention was made in both incidents that this was certainly not always the case when working with black musicians (Artico Int. 2006; Birkholtz Int. 2010; Makuzeni Int. 2010). With regard to booking string quartets, agents often ask the question: 'is there a person of colour?' 'Personally I have no problem with it' Birkholtz qualified. However, the paucity of black musicians, and specifically black female musicians working within this music scene, limits choice of whom you can hire (and who might be available for hire), she explained. In these circumstances, the quality of the music can be negatively affected, she reflected (Birkholtz Int. 2010).

A far more positive perspective came from musical director and pianist Janine Neethling, who regularly works with many of South Africa's best-known singers and musicians of all races. In Neethling's early career, she worked predominantly with white musicians before she 'gradually started moving across' into working with racially-integrated groups, a situation she far prefers. She explains that even in the context of *Skouspel*: 'I'll make sure that I always have one black backing vocalist, because the sound is different anyway, and I do not want to be known as a musician who only works with white people!' *Skouspel* is the annual high-budget showcase of predominantly white Afrikaans music over several days, which Neethling described as 'the biggest televised, light-music event in South Africa on paper, whether you like it or not' (Int. 2006). Neethling's preference for the 'sound' of a black voice reveals her own musical tastes. Similarly white saxophonist, flugelhorn player and vocalist Pam Mortimer described how she has been predominantly influenced by the sound of black musicians (Int. 2006). While she did not articulate it in these terms, it was evident in the long list of black African musicians, including Feya Faku, Sidney Mnisi, George Lee and Dudu Pukwana, who she described as of seminal influence to her musical development. Both Neethling and Mortimer spoke of their positive experiences of working

with many black colleagues, as did saxophonist Shannon Mowday (Mortimer Int. 2006; Neethling Int. 2006; Mowday Int. 2007). Notably, none of these women dwelt on this phenomenon. Working in racially-mixed situations to them feels natural and musically driven.

In particular, Pam Mortimer expressed her preference for working with black musicians. Her emphasis, however, was not on race but on the quality and inspiration she finds in their musicianship and creativity (Int. 2006). This musical identification which 'bypasses' race is echoed by Shannon Mowday:

> Music is also a way of communicating with people. You have an instant communication, because you have a common denominator. You can get through language barriers, you can get through racial barriers or whatever it is that normal people might struggle with, and you can go straight to the nitty-gritty. *I am what I play*, so the minute I play, you can know who I am. (Mowday 2007b, n.p.)

In other moments (see Chapter Four), jazz musicians Mortimer (Int. 2006) and Mowday (Int. 2007) express their frustration and loneliness in their careers as female instrumentalists, but with regard to race, their musical identity comfortably lies strongly in jazz and is heavily influenced by black musicians and musical styles.[78]

Another perspective on race came from choral conductor and music educator Susan Cock. She spoke thoughtfully about the ability of music to introduce people of different races and cultures to each other's traditions, languages and musical practices. In the context of her experience of teaching African songs to schoolchildren, she described how black children usually help white children to learn the language and accompanying movements of a song, and described this as 'good for everyone.' She recalled the welcoming environment of the mixed race choirs of her early experience, and of the black choirs she has been invited to perform with. 'My experience is that it makes people smile when I sing, and they're not laughing at me … in singing we were able to share an experience' (Cock Int. 2006). Similarly, Claire Johnston described how music connected Mango Groove's band members of different races, backgrounds and very disparate ages; she recalled that she was seventeen and trombonist Mickey Vilikazi sixty-four at the time she joined the band (Int. 2006).

[78] Race is a contested area of jazz studies and contemporary American jazz. For a good summary of the issues, see Nat Hentoff's 'Is Jazz Black Music?' and Harry Edwards' 'Black, White and Beyond' (Hentoff 2008, n.p.; Edwards 2001, n.p.). In particular, Wynton Marsalis has been outspoken on jazz being the sole authentic domain of African-Americans historically and in praxis (McMullen in Rustin and Tucker 2008: 141). Historically, jazz in South Africa was politicised and remains so, but is marked in the post-apartheid era by musicians' paramount concerns about performance opportunities, and dwindling venues and audiences. Gwen Ansell asserts that 'it may be, though, that class is now overdetermining race', pointing out that the two biggest jazz festivals in the country are 'both controlled by black-owned production companies' (Ansell 2004: 293).

Johnston also related the extremes of sometimes-hostile audiences to mixed bands in the 1980s, and the difficulties of touring as a mixed band during the apartheid era when black band members, for instance, would be refused service in restaurants or at petrol stations. She remembers the glee of the band when they stole a 'Net Blankes' ('Only Whites') sign off a toilet door, which thereafter adorned the front of their tour vehicle. Johnston describes the 'enormous suspicion' with which the band was sometimes viewed:

> It was as if we were bloody politicians from South Africa and had to justify the system we had created! But it would change when people saw us on stage; that's when it would change … all of that would stop, and they'd say: okay, now we get it; now we understand, but if people had just heard about the band, … they assumed there was some sort of exploitative thing going on by the white South Africans which was horribly offensive. (Johnston 2006)

When Mango Groove came to prominence in the 1980s and early 1990s, apartheid was into its last decade. At the time South Africa's tense political climate was dominated by the extreme and brutal oppression of the white minority Nationalist government which sought to maintain power and control over the increasingly militant and mobilized resistance movement of black South Africans whose insurrections were bringing the country ever-closer to civil war. At the same time there was the markedly increasing intensity of the international community's disapproval of South Africa. Racial interaction was discussed in overtly political and antagonistic terms in political, academic and popular discourse. Mixed-race bands were a relatively new phenomenon in South Africa, and Mango Groove was contentious, despite its popularity.[79] Its status as a 'cross-over' band, a term most often used in South Africa to describe Johnny Clegg and Sipho Mchunu's band Juluka (and Clegg's subsequent band Savuka), evoked reactions of both idealistic enthusiasm and stern criticism.[80] Rob Allingham, for instance, described its sound as 'not really African but a slickly arranged pop' and wrote: 'Mango Groove's material has downplayed the African element even further to concentrate on raising the profile of their white female lead singer' (1994: 387). One can detect not only disapproval of the genre of 'cross-over' (implied by the

[79] Legally forbidden from sharing the same stage since the 1960s, mixed race bands held little appeal for musicians because they attracted political heat and were not economically sustainable (Anderson 1981: 109). Johnny Clegg was the first bandleader to succeed in this regard (Broughton et al 1994: 387).

[80] 'Cross-over' refers to the hybrid musical sounds created in the synthesis of different musical genres, in Mango Groove's case a blend of pop with 'township' styles *marabi*, *mbaquanga* and the 1950s big band sound of 'township jazz.' Urban African popular music has typically incorporated a synthesis (in vastly differing localized styles) of African elements such as indigenous rhythms and call-and-response vocal patterns with Western song structures and instruments (such as electric guitars and drum kit). The merits of such hybridized music and the appropriation and acculturation of non-local musical forms have been debated for decades, primarily because of the slippery notion of 'authenticity' (a search for imagined roots) and very real issues of cultural imperialism (Wallis and Malm 1984; Burnett 1996; Gebesmair and Smudits 2001; Berger and Carroll 2003).

synthesis of pop and 'African' music he defines), but also an implied assertion that this is not 'authentic' African music, and an obvious discomfort with a band that roots itself in an African sound but is fronted by a white singer. This observation is not meant as a personal criticism of (Gallo archivist) Allingham, whose contribution to South African music is considerable,[81] but rather to reflect a way of thinking prevalent in this period (see Chapter One).

Johnston's overt mention of race should be read in this context. She is not talking of the music she makes 'now' but, (as expressed in the quotations above) of the music she made 'then' in the apartheid era. As I interpret their sentiments, Johnston and Cock's idealism shows belief in the transformative power of music—to convince and to teach, to heal and to reconcile, formed during their earlier/younger experience pre-1994. Pertinent here is this point Paul Gilroy articulates in his discussion of black identity:

> The power of music in developing our struggles by communicating information, organizing consciousness and testing out, deploying, or amplifying the forms of subjectivity which are required by political agency, individual and collective, defensive and transformational, demands attention to both the formal attributes of this tradition of expression and its distinctive *moral* basis…In the simplest of possible terms, by posing the world as it is against the world as the racially subordinated would like it to be, this musical culture supplies a great deal of the courage required to go on living in the present. (in Hall and du Gay 1996:120)

For Johnston and Cock, their experience of working with black musicians, and as a result their experience of black music styles, seems an important part of their making sense of themselves and the world in which they function. One can recognise in this what Simon Frith describes as the 'imagined self'. Frith explains this phrase further: 'Identity comes from the outside not the inside; it is something we put or try on, not something we reveal or discover' (1993: 121-2).

Do these women, then, through their music-making, negotiate a way between their individual selves and the identities of other South Africans to an imagined, better South Africa? As a young woman who grew up in what she describes as a 'right-wing' home where 'there was this feeling there was nothing good in Africa around,' Susan Cock was forced to study classical music, despite a far greater feeling of attraction towards popular and African music (Int. 2006). In her adult career, she has consciously explored other musical styles and ways of music-making, even though she still makes music in largely classical music contexts (teaching, conducting and composing for instance). Significantly, it is her

[81] See the Acknowledgements in Allen (2000: n.p.), Ballantine (2012: 15, 186, 199, 201 and 218) and Allingham (in Broughton et al, 1994: 373-390).

positive experiences of South African black choral music and popular music that dominated our recorded conversation. Similarly, Claire Johnston's use of the term 'diaspora' reveals her desire to place herself meaningfully in the social world (Int. 2006). In a discussion about her work as a solo artist (as distinct from that with Mango Groove with whom she is so associated in the public eye), Johnston describes the choice of songs for her 2004 solo album, *Africa Blue*, as all being linked to Africa's diaspora. On its CD sleeve, she writes:

> This album represents an entirely personal celebration of the enormous power of the African Diaspora's musical legacy. It barely scratches the surface, I know, but these are the songs, sounds and styles I grew up on and loved. I celebrate them as an English girl who came here as a child, fell in love with South Africa and has made Africa her heart and her home….' (*Africa Blue* liner notes, 2004)

She places her own music-making within this diaspora in an uncomplicated way (even if it can be read by others as more complicated, particularly within an academic reading of the term diaspora).[82] Her statement clearly reveals her *desire to belong* to an African musical identity, and to a nation. Her straightforward statement shows her awareness of 'English' influences (she left England at the age of eight and grew up as a white South African) but her conscious choice of identification with 'truly' African experiences.

The point here is not about the cultural value that Cock or Johnston may offer, but how their music-making reveals both individual and social identity, and allows them to participate in what Simon Frith describes as 'imagined forms of democracy and desire' (1998: 123). This resonates strongly with Frith's statement that music can teach us how identity is 'always already an ideal, what we would like to be, not what we are' (ibid.). 'Music constructs our sense of identity through the experiences it offers of the body, time and sociability, experiences which enable us to place ourselves in imaginative cultural narratives' (1998: 124).

In my interpretation, distinct differences can be seen in how women perceive race, and its impact on their own identity and music-making. From the above personal views and situations it is apparent that each individual amalgamates experience, racially influenced or gained through social and educational exposure: women musicians who lived through the apartheid era carry with them cultural and ethical ideas which remain influential in their

[82] The term 'diaspora' comes from the Greek meaning, 'to disperse', and denotes the 'voluntary or forcible movements of peoples from their homelands into new regions', a central 'historical fact of colonization' (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin 2000: 68). 'Diaspora' is a central term used within post-colonial studies in discussions of how imperialism, migration, past slavery and indenture affect people's lives. In this context of the diaspora of black Africans, Johnston's identification with a 'diaspora' may, to some, be complicated by the fact of her whiteness. However, her concept of her identity significantly becomes inclusive of her African influences.

professional choices and actions today. Some women choose to embrace an alternate culture yet bring to it their own background; younger women, like Malebye, develop through their education and searching, stimulated by their racial background. Awareness of race mingles with a multitude of influences that constitute their identity.

Sexuality, sexual persuasion and homophobia

I turn now to another area of identity not always easily spoken of: queer sexuality. The terms *lesbian* and *gay* are far more prevalent in popular discourse, certainly in that of the musicians I spoke to, yet I choose the term *queer* in this discussion to avoid any gender-based assumptions that may foreground perceptions about same-sex sexual persuasion, or what Sheila Whitely describes as 'designating which sex is desiring/being desired' (Whitely and Rycenga 2006: xiv). Whitely maintains that by using the term *queer*, 'a certain fluidity is achieved that refuses gender-based constructions. In short, queer becomes the taboo-breaker' (ibid.). While only one woman in my sample was openly queer, the phenomenon of queer musicians was certainly mentioned.

In Chapter One I explained how my own career as a female saxophonist informed choosing women musicians' lived experiences as my research focus. My observation as a participant in music-making allowed me insight at times into seeing how musicians relate to each other. Unlike Lucy Green's (2002: 9) respondents who did not know her at the outset of her research, I was acquainted with several musicians before interviewing them.[83] One example of observing gender dynamics at play in music-making is pertinent here. I noticed, in various situations, how certain musicians would use being queer as a 'put-down'. The comments being made about a musician were often nothing to do with their sexuality, yet being 'gay' or 'lesbian' was used as a derogative comment, meant to add emphasis and innuendo. For instance, a male jazz musician I worked with, arguably one of the most experienced and professional musicians on stage on that occasion, was referred to as 'feminine' and 'a pouf', and his hairstyle mocked by other male musicians behind his back. Similarly, while deputising for another saxophonist in the Barnyard theatre, I witnessed musicians, both male

[83] My being known as a musician, and having already met some women through being hired to play together provided a useful grounding of participant observation. Also, it gave me a certain 'insider' status with the women I interviewed. As the interviews progressed, I sought out other women to interview whom I did not already know, and to whom I had been referred by other respondents.

and female, refer to saxophonist and musical director Abbey Artico in unflattering terms, and her being queer was a matter of repeated comment. For this reason, I was interested to interview Artico to hear her perspective on how she perceives others' reactions to her sexuality.

In my interview with Artico, I did not gain any sense that she felt maligned or irritated by others, nor did I experience the aggressive and strident behaviour I had heard described. Artico was friendly to me and only generous in her descriptions of musicians she works with, male and female. Furthermore, she was one of the most thoughtful respondents in suggesting other women who she felt may be interesting for me to interview and gave me many contact numbers. 'I mean I'm gay and I've never had shit from anybody I've worked with, *ever*!' she stated (Int. 2006). When I asked: 'Really?' she emphatically responded: 'Never. Never. I've never had shit, never. I've never had anyone marginalise me, talk down to me, anything, ever.' When I speculated that perhaps people would not dare to treat her this way because she is forthcoming and has a strong personality, she laughed. 'Probably,' Artico replied, 'I'm so pushy and such a strong person and no one would dare!'

Certainly it was surprising that Artico was only positive, with no axe to grind, so to speak. I will speculate (and it *is* speculation) that either or both of the following dynamics may be apparent: firstly, it is possible that Artico's queerness is uncomfortable to some who then project their homophobia into comments about other aspects of her behaviour or personality. Clearly she is confident and opinionated, and perhaps this is key to why people perceive her as 'unfeminine', 'pushy' or uncontained. She epitomises a type of woman—outspoken, not in need of a man, comfortable and successful in a male-dominated arena (being a saxophone player)—who challenges others' (male or female) views of femininity. Secondly, she may simply have not felt enough trust of either me or how I might use things she said to me, and was not prepared to engage on the issue of either her queerness or any conflict with a colleague. She may, as in Khubeka's statement to Ansell, have been implying to me that 'I'm not going there with you' (Artico Int. 2006; Ansell Int. 2007).

Another issue is that of a woman being perceived to be queer, even though she is not. Janine Neethling, for instance, relates:

> Well, a lot of people thought that I was gay, in the business, because I didn't have a partner and I had a lot of women around me at the time. A lot of people thought I was gay, but then again it just never came up! I was never asked about it. Only years later when I got together with Dale [her husband] …

> about four years after I was up in Joburg, they said: 'oh, you're not gay!' No! But it didn't seem to make a difference to me …. (Int. 2006)

Similarly, bass guitarist Lipalesa Lebabo described how she has often been thought to be queer, particularly early on in her career:

> Yes, I have come across people who say: 'this is a male instrument. It's not for females to play' and I'm like: 'it's just an instrument, and I like it! So what's wrong with me playing a bass! So I remember when I came to Joburg some people thought I was a lesbian when they saw me playing bass, [she laughs] serious! So some people thought I was a lesbian, which I was not, and they were so amazed to see a female playing the bass, and they just didn't understand how and why, so they drew their own conclusions. (Int. 2006)

She is not comfortable with the idea of people musing about her sexuality, but described how she had 'come to live with it'. 'Identity. It's up to them, because people never stop thinking and talking' (Int. 2006).[84] In a similar vein, in reference to men in Western classical music, Susan Cock made this statement: 'I think it's difficult enough, funnily enough, to be a man in music, because there's a huge perception from outside that a man in a creative field has to be gay' (Int. 2006). Kerry Hiles made another remark: 'a couple of years ago you were a complete pansy if you were a boy taking piano lessons' (Int. 2006). She said this in jest as a feigned statement of what she believes the stereotype to be, and gave another example: 'maybe a girl playing the drums is just a bit butch' (ibid.). Even from these few examples, it is evident that gender stereotypes about sexual persuasion do abound which can inhibit one's identity. This is what Lucy Green has described as music's 'tendency … to feminise' (1997: 25).

On the issue of queerness, Gwen Ansell spoke both from personal and collective experience gained from her in-depth knowledge of South African popular music and jazz, and of the musicians who make it. She too recognizes the pejorative use of the terms 'lesbian or gay' and 'dyke'. While 'I have no problem with people being gay' she explained, she does take issue with being 'accused of being lesbian or gay' in moments when she is 'pushy and aggressive'. Ansell's comments reveal a keen perception of the ways in which women who do not conform to traditional stereotypes of femininity, are maligned. 'I think a lot of pushy or strong women, who are not necessarily gay, tend to get put into that bag, because men don't understand what gayness is about. And in South Africa I think that goes across race, I really do' (Int. 2006). She further described how queer musicians resist being open about their sexual persuasion in the public eye, because heteronormativity dominates popular thinking. This is not because queer sexualities do not exist, but because they are not

[84] Lara Allen quotes Lebabo speaking on the same issue ten years earlier, so evidently this is an ongoing stereotype Lebabo contends with (2000: 159).

commonly well received or at least not within the world of South African popular music and jazz.

Although I did not interview singer Gloria Bosman in the course of this research, the media speculation over her sexual preference is pertinent to this discussion. At the time of her highly regarded debut album, *Tranquility*, Bosman was purported in the press to be lesbian (Dlamini 2002: n.p.; Molema 2003: n.p.). She has, however, publicly denied this, despite ongoing media speculation. She emphasises her newfound Christianity in interviews, and her public image presents a more demure, mature look: she now often performs in more culturally-inspired or stereotypically-feminine outfits. When I asked Ansell whether she imagines that Bosman has deliberately toned down her image and tried to keep her sexuality out of the public domain, she responded: 'She hadn't realised that people would react against it … I have talked to musicians—sweet, kind musicians—who say: "you know, she's a great singer, but I can't take all this lesbian shit!" And I ask: "What's wrong with it?" and say: "If you've got issues with it, it's your problem (Int. 2007)!" '

Ansell also said to me: 'Now, an interesting question for you: do you know of any musician – black, male – in this country who has admitted to being gay? And that has "come out" in the way that, say, Fred Hersch or Billy Strayhorn eventually "came out"? And you try telling people in this country that Billy Strayhorn was gay and you see the appalling reaction, the *appalled* reaction you get: "No, *never*!"'[85] Ansell spoke too of a friend of hers who is a music organizer who divorced once he realized he was queer. She described how he has 'lost contacts in the music industry' since his open revelation. Ansell commented poignantly: 'Gloria [Bosman] has been braver than any male musician I know. Tell me about jazz male gay musicians in this country and what the reaction to them you think would be, because I have a feeling they would get crucified worse than gay women musicians do! And we don't have a gay musician here [who has come out publicly], and maybe we do need a Fred Hersch! … I'm starting to think it's about time we had a gay male black jazz artist in this country who wasn't scared to say so'. Ansell firmly believes 'there is far more of a horror of male gayness in that community than of female gayness', and commented that some men can 'get quite turned on by the idea of gay women anyway' (Int. 2006). Ansell raised another very interesting point:

[85] Jazz has traditionally epitomised the male macho image, and it is only in contemporary times that previously prevalent issues of homophobia and queer identity are being reassessed (Gavin 2001, n.p.; Murph 2010, n.p.).

> Well in fact you would be interested in something I have observed around the pop scene, which is that there are an awful lot of these really glamorous young chicks in magazines such as *Y-Mag* who are actually gay. Women talk about it, and a number of people have told me this, not in a gossipy way, but just in a 'she's one of us' kind of way. [These are] gay women, but you'll never get them to talk about it. Her image is of a sexy young thing, and that's it. And that to me is also quite interesting. (2006)[86]

This idea puts an unusual spin on to the highly sexualised images of women in, for example, *kwaito* videos and *Y-Mag,*[87] and the implications of what Angela Impey describes as 'women's apparent collusion in their objectification' in her oppositional reading of women in *kwaito's* overtly sexualised modes of self-representation (2001: 47)[88]. Ansell's phrase 'you'll never get them to talk about it' is significant here, and echoes not only Bosman's retreat from public speculation on her sexual preference, but also the experience of the late, great Brenda Fassie. The only South African musician to have publically embraced her queer identity, Fassie's public image was plagued by scandal and media criticism which rocked her public image after she 'came out' a few years before her untimely death in 2004.[89] In his perceptive, finely-nuanced account of Fassie, Njabulo Ndebele charts the unique interplay between her popularity and this controversy in his discussion of the value of her contribution to South African life. 'Indeed', he writes, 'long before the issue of sexual preference became a burning constitutional issue, Brenda had long widened the door' (Ndebele 2004: n.p.). Fassie's public confirmation of her bisexuality, and her 'outspokenness on the taboo subject of sex' did much to bring into the public sphere ideas and debate about sexual preference (ibid.). 'It is the difficult question of identity, within the context of our own unfolding national identity, that I am struggling with as I try to unravel my intuitions about why I have found the phenomenon of Brenda Fassie so intriguing', writes Ndebele (ibid.).

That one of South Africa's most loved, reviled and 'superstar' musical artists raised these issues before her untimely death is, in my view, significant. The flame of her fame and cultural importance,[90] and indeed of her notoriety too, has not been extinguished by her death. Nearly a decade after her death, Brenda Fassie remains a public figure who evokes both pride and triumph, as well as challenge and speculation. More is the loss to South

[86] Mduduzi Aka Dlamini has speculated that singing stars Thandiswa Mazwai, Lebo Mathosa and others are lesbian or bisexual (Dlamini 2002: n.p). Ziphezinhle Msimango writes of 'reports about' Mazwai's 'lesbianism and female lovers' being 'splashed across the rags' (Dlamini 2002: n.p.; Msimango 2009: n.p.).
[87] See, for example, *Y-Mag*, Issue number 86, February/March 2007.
[88] This is certainly a very interesting area for further research, but may benefit from the 'insider' status of a black, queer researcher.
[89] For a moving (if not academic) description of Fassie's story, see Andrew Whaley's biography of Fassie (2004).
[90] Ndebele evokes the metaphor of Fassie's 'ungovernable voice' and the strategy of political ungovernability (2004: n.p.).

Africa if subsequent queer artists, male or female, will retreat from the controversy Fassie started, and choose to hide this vital part of their identity, fearful that neither their artistic integrity nor fan base will survive the storm.

Age, image and sexuality

This chapter proceeds now to a discussion of another aspect of identity somewhat more easily spoken about than race or sexual persuasion: age. There is a common phenomenon that popular music is predominantly made by young musicians (certainly pop and dance styles, although rock could be seen to have exceptions in this regard). Claire Johnston, for instance, recalled the varied ages of Mango Groove's band members (see above) as not only contributing positively to the band's diversity, but also being unusual (Int. 2006). Conversely, youth is far less dominant in jazz: young players enter and inject the scene, but jazz musicians are able to sustain long careers. In keeping with this perception, several women raised the idea that advancing age is not an impediment to a woman's age in jazz (Cock Int. 2006; Goddard Int. 2006; Twyford Int. 2006; Malebye Int. 2007). When I raised the issue of ageism in music, Ansell responded with the interesting observation that in South Africa, it is in fact younger women that need to deal with ageism in performing careers: 'I think you must sense [the respect for] Sis Dorothy, Ma Miriam. All of those [women] are now grandmothers. And you know about African culture and grandmothers! So the fact that they are older is to their credit' (Int. 2007). However, Ansell also comments that things are changing in this respect in South Africa:

> But you be Brenda [Fassie] and try and grow up musically, and see what happens to you: you're destroyed. So in some ways I think there has been a cultural change, and a lot of it has to do with the breakdown of old social values in societies here. You know the mother, as a figure of respect, is far less powerful than she used to be, and we all know how men objectify you. (Int. 2007)

She perceives a clash of values between popular culture's preoccupation with youth and renewal (borrowed strongly from Anglo-American popular music), and the respect for elders, specifically mothers and grandmothers, which historically influences black South Africans' social thinking (if now abrogated by changed urbanised and globalised realities).[91]

[91] Lara Allen writes of the importance of motherhood to the South African women musicians she interviewed (see Chapter Two). Previously, I have alluded to women being revered in black African society at large as 'mothers of the nation' (Walker 1995; Allen 2000; Hassim 2006: 129).

A few significant points relate to Ansell's views here. First, she is of an older generation who lived through early second wave feminism in the late 1960s and early 1970s and supported it: 'Oh, I'm a feminist! I don't mind saying it! You know if people don't like it they may leave the room as far as I am concerned' (Int. 2007). Unsaid here too is the fact that she grew up in England (not South Africa), and so experienced feminism in its renewed urgency (which then in its South African reception developed different implications (Hassim 2006)). So Ansell is unafraid to speak out on matters of concern to feminist thinkers, such as gender stereotypes. Second, her in-depth knowledge of the South African music scene and her relationships with musicians, formed over several decades, inform her comments. Had I interviewed more of the (now older) women whom Gwen Ansell and Lara Allen have done, I might have my own primary evidence to support her view that popular perceptions of aging are changing. However, two young black women echoed Ansell's view that younger women can experience a form of ageism.

Nkoto Malebye spoke of being 'the baby in the cast' in one particular professional production, and spoke of fellow performers being competitive and undermining: 'they want to just pull you around everywhere … It was so hard for me at the time'. She made the significant point that women performers can be threatened by younger women: 'you get women who say: go girl, but you also get women who don't see that light within themselves, but they have light. So they think: why is her light shining brighter than mine? When in actual fact we all have light, different kinds of light. Work on yours, and see yours, and celebrate yours … I'm harmless, I really am (Int. 2006)!' Another young woman also spoke of being the youngest member of a musical group, in her case a band, in which she felt that she was not always taken seriously. She became more angered by this persisting dynamic, and wondered if it 'has a lot to do with me being a woman' when a new, male member of the band, younger than she, was not only taken more seriously over musical matters, but his ineptitude over matters of organisation was bypassed surprisingly easily.[92]

Other than the perspectives on women musicians, age and popular music detailed above, the majority of women raised the negative effects of aging during a woman's career on stage (Bentlage Int. 2006; Hiles Int. 2006; Johnston Int. 2006; Ribeiro Int. 2006; Twyford Int. 2006; Birkholtz Int. 2010; Mhlongo Int. 2010). The women who hold these views work mostly in musical theatre, the corporate function scene and pop. Connie Bentlage and

[92] I choose not to name this woman here. She still performs with the band and these matters have been resolved.

Celeste Ribeiro articulated the issues involved most clearly. Bentlage observed that there is a strong preference for booking younger women in musical theatre (Bentlage Int. 2006).[93] She also observed that 'the competition is tough' and that there are many young, talented women coming on to the scene. Celeste Ribeiro echoed Bentlage's comments on age, and expanded further that the Barnyard Theatre producers, for instance, want ever-younger and new faces: 'the older the musicians are in the band, the younger they want the girls out front to be, because it gives them a fresh look … I'm noticing it more and more, and she doesn't have to be particularly great or anything, but young and fresh' (Int. 2006). Connie Bentlage (Int. 2006) also mentioned youth, along with a sexy image, as 'the look' that theatre producer Richard Loring wanted for his all-woman Girl Talk productions (discussed further below). Ribeiro made the practical observation that younger women starting out in their careers are also prepared to work for less remuneration than more established musicians. Ribeiro and other women also comment that as they age they choose to adopt a different image on stage (del Mei Int. 2006; Hiles Int. 2006; Ribeiro Int. 2006; Zlatkova Int. 2006). From observation of their stage performances, I must add here that all of these women are not only dynamic performers on stage, but are attractive, have slim, trim figures and are able to wear sexy, revealing outfits with confidence. The point is that they are *choosing* to wear what they consider to be more age-appropriate apparel as they age. 'When I was in my early twenties, I wore the tiniest, teensiest numbers: short mini skirts, thigh-high boots, and shorts on stage' relates Ribeiro, adding that she'll still wear this if a scene in a musical theatre production requires it, such as impersonating Tina Turner, but that she prefers less revealing, elegant clothes on stage now. Furthermore, she comments that elegance rather than sexiness is paramount in the corporate function scene, a point reiterated by other women working in this field (del Mei Int. 2006; Goddard Int. 2006; Hiles Int. 2006; O'Hanlan Int. 2006; Ribeiro Int. 2006; Birkholtz Int. 2010). Del Mei explains:

> I don't want to flash my legs or my tummy, and if I do it's not because someone is telling me to, it's because I want to and feel comfortable. Generally, that's why I like the corporate. I like to be classy, and I think it's also got me further going the classy, elegant route rather than the trashy, blonde 'chick' who plays the saxophone in a short skirt. (Int. 2006)

Acknowledging that female singers, saxophonists and violinists are required to present a sexy image on the Barnyard Theatre stages, she says: 'I'm glad I feel I've moved away from

[93] Musical theatre in South Africa is dominated by 'cover shows' such as those staged in The Barnyard Theatre circuit countrywide. This comment then refers more particularly to this type of musical theatre rather than smaller cabaret performances or revue shows, although this does not exclude women working in those types of musical theatre productions.

that'. However, there is still an emphasis on women 'looking good' in the corporate function scene: 'People do really watch and listen with their eyes too' (del Mei Int. 2006).

It struck me repeatedly how these women are keenly aware of the importance of appearing youthful on stage, and that their careers on stage will be far shorter than their professional lives. They do not speak of the popular obsession with youthful or sexualised stage images with resentment or disdain, but rather as a fact of their performing lives, around which they manage their performance choices. Phrases such as 'speaking now from an older person in the industry – older meaning I'm not twenty-one anymore' (Ribeiro Int. 2006) and 'now that I'm getting older' (del Mei Int. 2006) were commonplace in interviews with glamorous, beautiful women in their thirties (Bentlage Int. 2006; Mhlongo Int. 2010). Elena Zlatkova's innuendo summed this up: 'It's not about music now, I'm sure in a few years…' (Int. 2006). The implication of this remark is that her image is a positive factor in the performance work she is currently offered, a situation which may well change adversely as she ages.

Concerns about aging are less prevalent for instrumentalists than vocalists. Notably, however, women who work as instrumentalists in musical theatre, pop and the corporate function scene are still aware of the importance of image and age on stage (del Mei Int. 2006; Zlatkova Int. 2006). Bass player and vocalist Kerry Hiles (Int. 2006), for instance, believes that women in music 'have an age limit' whereas male performers do not face the problem to the same extent: 'you can go on stage as a fat, bald seventy-year-old man, but for a woman?' When I asked her directly if she thinks female instrumentalists are as affected by these perceptions as singers, she answered:

> No, I think singers are hard pressed when they start hitting 30 or mid-30s. I don't really want to see you on stage in a short skirt anymore…you might have a beautiful body, but the fact that you've aged – it loses the appeal. I think men can be an old rocker, but you can't as a woman. But I think the instrumentalists do have a longer life span, and you can always do jazz. You can do jazz until you are 130… It's a different vision that people have for jazz, but for rock 'n roll shows and stuff, you've got to be *really* looking good. (2006)

There is a common perception that the lifespan of a female jazz musician's performance career is longer than that in pop or theatre. Consequently, concerns of ageing are not as prevalent to women musicians in fields such as jazz (Mowday Int. 2007; Mailula Int. 2012). Women who work in areas of the music industry other than performance, such as arranging, musical direction or music journalism, also spoke less about the impact of ageing on their careers (Artico Int. 2006; Bentlage Int. 2006; Cock Int. 2006; Neethling Int. 2006; Ansell Int. 2007). Yet while there is a perception that jazz is less ageist, stereotypical thinking about

image and gender influences the reception of female instrumentalists in this genre.[94] Age plays a part within stereotyped attitudes towards female bodies on stage and is often hard to disentangle from image in much thinking about female bodies on stage.

Rather startling evidence of this comes from a comment Kristel Birkholtz made based on her postgraduate research:

> I don't know if anyone else raised this with you [the author] in your talks but I have found – again I speak from personal experience and not from my research – that a fair number of young performers value plastic surgery as an investment in their careers. I know some of the older performers have had plastic surgery done to keep looking youngish, but younger girls who haven't had kids or who really are just fine as they are (in my opinion at least!) feel pressure to 'enhance' themselves through surgery in various ways for the stage. I don't know which ones would want to chat openly about this, it is something discussed in the dressing rooms …. (Int. 2010)

Age featured less strongly with instrumentalists (black or white) working in more African-inspired popular music styles than in other forms of performance (Insinger Int. 2006; Nokwe Int. 2006; Mowday Int. 2007; Int. Mailula 2012). Most of the black women I interviewed were relatively young and voiced little concern over how ageing may impact on their careers. Tu Nokwe, one of the more mature women of my sample, felt age was a positive point of concern in her musical career: she has experience and skills to share with young people in the role of teacher (Int. 2006). On the other hand, bass player Lipalesa Lebabo battles hard to sustain her musical career, more so than any other woman I interviewed. The reasons for this are multifold. Dampers to her career include not having her own car, being the primary carer for her teenage daughter's young child, and difficulty finding work. She believes that her work in musical theatre (the performance space where she has established herself as a bass player) has diminished now that there are 'younger women out there' doing the same thing as she does (ibid.).

Several women articulated strategies for sustaining their performance careers. Women spoke of other professional fields that interest them, and of side-moves within music from performing to teaching (van der Merwe Int. 2006; del Mei Int. 2006; Goddard Int. 2006; Lebabo Int. 2006; Mhlongo Int. 2010). Vicky Goddard and Ziza Mhlongo teach music currently and spoke of future ambitions to teach more. While both find teaching a rewarding and enjoyable experience, they view it as a safer route to making a living in the long term

[94] See O'Brien (1995), Handy (1998) and Tucker (2000).

than performing.[95] Both believe that the lifespan of a female performer is limited by age, although Mhlongo, in particular, still considers her identity as a performer far more crucial than as a teacher at this point of her life (Goddard Int. 2006; Mhlongo Int. 2010). Nevertheless, Mhlongo has embarked on studying towards a Masters degree, as she hopes to teach more in tertiary education settings in future (Int. 2010).

Place, nationality and identity

So far I have discussed race, sexual persuasion and age with regard to an individual's identity formation. Another vital aspect of identity construction is nationality. Mhlongo, for instance, spoke of her postgraduate studies as an important part of assimilating her disparate experiences in the different genres of classical music, East European folk music, popular music and jazz. She explained that through performing and writing in an academic setting, she could explore her own identity: 'I am Croatian, I live in South Africa and I am married to a Zulu man'. She explains the personal concerns of place, nationality and musical identity she is exploring in her study of *Balkanology*[96] in South Africa:

> It is weird because it is taking me back to a place that I ignored. This kind of music that I am researching is kind of traditional music that I never really liked. My parents liked it, and always sang it—particularly when they had had a bit to drink—and I always thought it was an acquired taste … but I suppose I was really young then. We're talking about a kind of music akin to Portuguese *fado*. It is very heartfelt and the interpretations are very drawn out and very indulgent, but … now I can't get enough of it. Your ears get developed … It came from the people … I come from. (Int. 2010)

She spoke of 'going back to the lyrics, and back to the origins' of Croatian folk music, and how, through this research, she is negotiating aspects of her own identity as both an immigrant to South Africa and as a musician who has spent her adult life performing in South Africa with local musicians.

Like Mhlongo, Franka Insinger is an immigrant to South Africa. Born in the Netherlands, she lived in Jakarta in Indonesia in her youth, and spoke of the different and exciting musical influences in her youth. She completed her secondary schooling in South Africa and studied

[95] Kgaogelo Mailula did not voice concern over aging possibly affecting her performance career. However, she made the point that teaching is something musicians very often turn to in order 'to put bread on the table' (Mailula 2012).

[96] 'Balkonology' is a term that became the unifying description for a remixed fusion of dance music with diverse south-east European folk melodies, performed at public dance party events in South Africa. The actual term was coined by an Israeli impresario, Ma'or Harris, who lives and works in Cape Town. Particularly popular between 2006 and 2010 in Johannesburg and Cape Town, 'Balkanology' parties were characterised by live performances, gypsy costumes and a genre of music called 'Neo-Balkan'.

drama at university. Fairly soon after this she joined the well-known South African group Sankomota as a saxophonist and backing vocalist in the early 1990s. Her deep love of South African jazz is evident in her own performance style both as a singer (she sings effortlessly in Zulu and Xhosa), and in her saxophone playing (she regularly performs South African repertoire by composers such as Abdullah Ibrahim and Winston 'Mankunku' Ngozi, and her saxophone sound references local saxophonists such as McCoy Mrubata, Basil 'Mannenberg' Coetzee and Mankunku).[97] Her experiences in music were an important part of her own identity formation and, like Claire Johnston, her seminal experiences have been in multiracial bands. However, unlike Mango Groove who were based in Johannesburg and enjoyed considerable commercial success, Sankomota was based in Lesotho much of the time, and living there with the band and touring through Africa coloured Insinger's experience differently. She poignantly articulates experiencing the poverty of the musicians in Lesotho with phrases like 'Frank [Leepa]'s sister was washing out her dustbin bags to reuse them', and descriptions of the same woman's untreated tuberculosis and a neighbour being molested next door. **'**It was such a rough environment' she reflects (Int. 2006). Insinger spoke too of witnessing the frustration of Leepa who was banned for a time from entering South Africa.

Having lived through physical dislocation from Johannesburg to a challenged, rural environment sets Insinger's experience apart from that of the other white, female musicians I interviewed. In my opinion Insinger has a more nuanced awareness of the dynamics between race, place and nationhood. Her music-making in these circumstances was a crucial aspect of her own identity formation, and the openness with which she shared her reflections was striking. She describes her experience starkly. She spoke of 'wanting to belong in a country where you love the music but you don't actually belong there' and on being a member of Sankomota: 'I belonged, but I didn't belong' (Int. 2006).

Shannon Mowday's music-making, by contrast, is increasingly taking her outside South Africa and she faces issues of emigration rather than immigration. Her brother lives permanently in Australia, and she too has permanent residency there. She recorded her album, *African Eyes* (2006), in Sydney and was in the process of emigrating to Australia when she won the Standard Bank Young Artist of the Year award in South Africa in 2007. The resulting local and international performances this award enabled meant that it was more

[97] Franka Insinger has not released an album. These are my observations based on her performances and listening to 'demo' recordings that she gave to me.

convenient to be based in South Africa than in Australia (Mowday Int. 2007). While the award changed her career course, it is her South African citizenship and 'because I am kind of regarded as one of the players on the scene in South Africa' that has established her reputation as a performer and composer. 'In Australia, I'm just another South African in Australia' she said, explaining that there she got caught up into a gig scene which she did not want, whereas now she is making her mark internationally, performing her own compositions (ibid.). At the time of writing, Mowday is resident in Oslo, Norway, but she regularly returns to perform and teach in South Africa. 'My plan is to go overseas and learn what I can and bring it back. There is a passion here and an energy here that I have never found in another country, and that's what draws me back to this place all the time' (ibid.).

Janine Neethling, like Mowday, considered emigrating elsewhere, particularly influenced by the idea that the best performers are expected to study and perform in Europe or North America 'because we don't have all that is required here' (Neethling Int. 2006). At the same time as she was moving from classical music into cabaret and musical theatre, she moved to Europe for a period:

> I landed in Frankfurt and I immediately started smiling, and I knew: this is great—this is not me. I don't want to be here! And I had a *great* six-month sojourn, travelling across [Europe]… playing from Stanley Wells to Rotterdam and I had a great, *incredible* concentrated life experience and *this* is where I want to be … We all know that! We *all* know that! (ibid.)

The joy of living in South Africa was echoed in an unexpected way by immigrant violinist Elena Zlatkova. Zlatkova came to live in South Africa when she married a South African jazz pianist. Although trained and experienced exclusively in classical music, she first secured work in the Barnyard Theatre. Although she now performs extensively in the Johannesburg classical music scene and is a successful performer in corporate functions, she explained that working in contemporary music freed her up as a performer and gave her confidence. Her previous classical music experiences in Europe had made her well accustomed to performing 'but this didn't teach me how to perform on stage and how to be confident and not nervous' (Zlatkova Int. 2006). She also spoke of the joy of learning to play African music and jazz, which she had not experienced in the musical education of her youth in Sophia, Bulgaria. When I asked about her future aspirations, Zlatkova replied that her 'biggest dream is just to do classical music' (ibid.). However, it has been her music-making in South Africa that has allowed her to relax as a performer. Zlatkova's strong Bulgarian accent and striking looks show her Eastern European background, but she speaks of South

Africa as home, the place most responsible for her personal and musical development and where, like Neethling, she most wishes to be (ibid.).

Performance and identity

Painting a picture of the physical and at times emotional poverty of Sankomota's surrounds, Insinger remarked:[98]

> I found that at Drama School … your body is very important, and what you do with your voice. Sure, actors are not the most holy of people, but you do focus in. You meditate in a way, before you go on stage. But when I was with Sankomota I remember thinking 'where's the magic on this stage? Where is the magic in the rehearsal room?' Everything was so brought down by the surroundings that we were in. We weren't in Sting's 17th century French castle, rehearsing with frescos on the wall. (Int. 2006)[99]

This raises two interesting points: firstly, that performers have modes of preparing for performance, and secondly, that the stage is seen as removed from real life. At another moment in the interview, Insinger described the stage thus: 'It's a place where you transcend the day-to-day shit and get to that other level of beauty, purity of expression, an essence in a way … I think it's probably that perfectionist side of me that wants beauty and truth to reign, and wants emotions to be given space to be expressed … I found that on stage' (Int. 2006). Less emotive than Insinger but equally articulate, Laurie Levine describes how her drama training allows her to feel comfortable on stage. She explains 'the fourth wall effect' as 'an invisible wall between the stage and the audience' and as part of performance: 'you are on stage and they are in the audience, and you've got to stand apart from the audience and present something to them' (Int. 2006).

Cathy del Mei, formally trained in music and sound engineering and not drama, revealed her very personal take on preparing herself for performance:

> Before every gig, before any performance, I first connect to my creative guides, my higher power, being, whatever [you wish to call it]. I imagine this white channel of light connecting me, almost like glitter sprinkling down through me. First I do that connection, then I protect myself: I imagine myself in a bubble of white light, then around that I imagine fire, because the other thing with performing is that it can be very draining if you let it … especially with the harsh lights … and the energy of other people in the audience … you've got to not let that drain you. So by putting the fire around myself,

[98] This statement is not intended as a criticism of Sankomota, nor is Insinger's description of her experiences with the band. The emotional poverty references the poor health, abuse of women and heavy drinking of certain band members she describes, all of which she contextualises as symptoms of the political oppression these black musicians endured (Insinger Int. 2006).

[99] Insinger refers here to Michael Apted's documentary, *Bring On The Night* (1985). Sting's first solo album *The Dream of the Blue Turtles* was launched at the Mogador Theatre in Paris, France, and the documentary films the band rehearsing in a magnificent French chateau.

> they can't get in. They can't drain you, they can appreciate and enjoy [my performance], but they can't take from me … So I do that, and then I fill the room with light and I imagine myself and their selves merging and just loving this moment of the music and I imagine it all just going fantastically well and them loving me and loving the music and vice versa. (2006)

Described in very different terms, this statement nonetheless echoes Levine's ideas of the separation of the performer and performance stage from the audience. 'You take on a persona' Levine explains. 'It might not be your own persona, but it's a part of you that you choose to focus on, so you can play timid on stage, or sexy, all sorts of characters, even if you don't do it consciously, but you become comfortable with one kind of persona' (Int. 2006). Other women I interviewed were less candid than this. However, a related area of concern to many women is how they view themselves as performers on stage, affected by the roles that they fulfill in their music-making. Significantly, these roles are often defined in opposition to what they are *not*, and strongly influence each women's sense of identity as a musician. Musical identities constructed as dualisms emerged from comments women made in the interviews: performers versus artists; up front, starring roles versus background roles; musicians versus singers and singers versus vocalists.

The first role distinction is the difference between being a performer and an artist. Significantly here, being a performer, as opposed to an artist, is not viewed as pejorative in the eyes of those who describe themselves as performers. Abbey Artico says: 'I do see myself as a performer before a musician. I put "performer" before "musician" always' (Int. 2006). She and Cathy del Mei, particularly, articulated the skills involved in being a successful entertainer and how they enjoy assuming this role on stage. Abbey Artico, who works predominantly in musical theatre and corporate functions, explains: 'People want to be entertained. They don't want to just listen ... We're dealing with an entertainment art'. She expressed her irritation at musicians who 'stand still on stage' and don't engage with their audience. She mentioned an incident in her early career when well regarded Canadian trumpeter Bruce Cassidy[100] commented to her: 'you've got such potential, you're a nice player, but you've got to learn to stand still. You're putting all your energy into your movements and not into your playing.' 'I will not! I will not!' she exclaimed, her laughter communicating her disregard for Cassidy's comment. Good technique (the objective of Cassidy's criticism) and musicianship as sole focus are evidently not paramount to Artico. 'I love watching a performer on stage' she commented about other musicians on stage. 'We're

[100] Known best for his work with the 1970s fusion band Blood, Sweat and Tears, and his collaborations with Pops Mohamed (together they recorded the album *Timeless*), Bruce Cassidy is a trumpeter, composer, arranger and educator who lived in South Africa from 1980 until 2003.

"happy-makers"; we're there to put some joy into people's lives for a couple of hours' (Int. 2006).[101]

When I asked if she feels her gender has affected her career as a musician, Artico responded that being female has positively contributed to the jobs she has done. However, more important she stressed, is her ability to 'make an audience happy'. Similarly, Cathy del Mei explains: 'I don't like to call myself a musician, I call myself an entertainer' (Int. 2006). The context of del Mei's music-making in corporate functions, is paramount to: 'For me it's about the whole package – yes you can play, maybe not as well as Candy Dulfer, but you can get by … Being presentable, being likeable, worker-friendly and being able to play' (Int. 2006).[102] Del Mei explained that she will often hire musicians to work with her who epitomise these qualities, rather than prioritising excellent musicianship. She gave examples of the difficulties of working with other women who are inflexible about how they dress or how they interact onstage with colleagues or offstage with clients.

I believe that 'the artist' should be seen in opposition to the identity of the performer or entertainer. However in popular discourse, 'artist' is often substituted for the more common meanings of 'performer' or 'musician', used in phrases such as 'recording artist' or 'solo artist' to denote a musician known in the public sphere. Used in this way, the term does not imply value judgment; artistry (creative skill and ability) is not implied. Ayanda Nhlangothi, for instance, used the term 'artist' this way to refer to recording artists, always in the context of their operating within an industry they must learn to negotiate (Int. 2006). The use of the term 'artist' as used in the first sentence of this paragraph, however, is that of a person in the creative arts in this context: a musician who has creative skill, technique and originality. It is significant that my interviewees tended not to refer to themselves as artists, even when they arguably are (Mowday Int. 2007; Mailula Int. 2012), but rather used the term in relation to others they revere and respect: those who compose and perform their own material, or are performers who display 'artistry' (Nhlangothi Int. 2006; Neethling Int. 2006; Twyford Int.

[101] Bentlage describes Artico: 'She's got the most unbelievable stage presence, and it rubs off on the people around her. My best shows are the ones I've been standing next to her. Her personality just lifts everybody on stage' (Bentlage Int. 2006).

[102] Daughter of Dutch jazz tenor saxophonist Hans Dulfer, saxophonist Candy Dulfer first came to prominence in the early 1990s. Her gender and the highly sexualised image she projected in her early career attracted both ardent fans, detractors and media comment. She has secured a reputation as an established recording artist and excellent funk saxophonist, and has performed with funk legend Maceo Parker and at all the major European jazz festivals.

2006; Mhlongo Int. 2010; Mailula Int. 2012).[104] Sibongile Khumalo, for instance, was singled out by several women as one such example, and repeatedly described as one of the most revered South African female artists (Insinger 2006; Neethling Int. 2006; Makuzeni Int. 2006; Nokwe Int. 2006; Mowday Int. 2007). These comments give the sense that artists are serious musicians, motivated more by ideals of art and expression, rather than commerce or entertainment. Another term that women used in this context was 'artistic integrity', referring to a quality of musicianship and, further, to making tough decisions in the face of commercial pressure (Nhlangothi Int. 2006; Nokwe Int. 2006; Mowday Int. 2007; Mailula Int. 2012).

The term artist can suggest more of a sense of struggle. Artists experience less popularity, less towing-the-line and by implication, are more original than performers. Further, there are difficulties associated with being an artist. When I asked Tu Nokwe, for instance, whether her career became easier as she established herself as a solo artist, she responded that it had in fact become more difficult. She mentioned issues of maintaining creative control, of intellectual property and the financial insecurity (Int. 2006). Pam Mortimer described several artists, who she much admires, living in poverty and either unable to find work as musicians or unwilling to do the work on offer. She spoke of a jazz musician, highly regarded in jazz circles, as living in squalor and unable to afford to buy meat at Christmas. 'There's just no appreciation. Jazz is an absolute minority' (Int. 2006). Shannon Mowday commented on the loneliness of being an artist at times, and the joy of being recognised for what you are doing (Int. 2007).

Another dichotomy that emerged is the distinction between 'product' and 'music', which I found surprising at first. However, for some women this clearly expresses their acknowledgment of their music (whether recorded or in performance) as a potential commodity within a structured market (the commercial music industry), without diminishing the value of their music-making.[105] Wendy Twyford, for example, talks of a 'creative product' rather than music, and the experience of collating musical ideas for performance or

[104] These references are to interviews in which women talked about other artists, with respect and admiration for these musicians.
[105] I had wrongly assumed that 'product' referred to music as commodity in the form of a CD or digital versions that sells. In his description of the 'industry value chain', Jonathan Shaw explains that 'the music industry is built around deriving revenue from music product. It consists of a variety of different industrial and service sectors. The products of these sectors can be physical products, services and intellectual property' (Shaw 2007:20).

recording that of 'getting some product together' (Int. 2006). Similarly, Janine Neethling explained in the context of her role as musical director: 'The product should always be the most important thing; the product being the performance—the best that those performers can possibly give of themselves' (Int. 2006). Many women comfortably spoke of product, but they were for the most part referring to music made for theatre productions, corporate functions and pop albums (Bentlage Int. 2006; del Mei Int. 2006; Neethling Int. 2006; Ribeiro Int. 2006; Twyford Int. 2006). Others spoke comfortably of different musical situations, where music is sometimes product, and sometimes art (Neethling Int. 2006; Mhlongo Int. 2010). Others are as comfortable performing in varying musical situations, some artistic and others more about pleasing a crowd (Zlatkova Int. 2006; Birkholtz Int. 2012; Mhlongo Int. 2010). Notably, the established women jazz musicians did not speak of music as 'product' (Mortimer Int. 2006; Mowday Int. 2006; Makuzeni Int. 2010).

As described above, the women interviewed identified with certain musical roles, and their relationship to these roles became a significant theme in how they described their music-making. A further distinction that emerged was between those who occupy the limelight and to those in the background. Pianist Melody van der Merwe spoke of her early experiences of singing and how uncomfortable she felt: 'I don't want to do it; I don't think it's in my personality. Singing is a frontline thing, and you're expected to woo and charm your audience. Back at the piano, you don't have to' (Int. 2006). Pianist and saxophonist Connie Bentlage commented on the same aspect of playing the keyboards, this time in relation to playing the saxophone:

> It's absolutely bizarre … why is it that I spend a night behind the keyboards, sweating my backside off, playing beautifully—because I'm not shy to say that I know I am a talented musician and know I play well—and I go out and play one sax solo, and people say wow! [Afterwards] they never mention the keyboards, but they mention the sax! What is that? Interesting, hey? And I'm a *visual* keyboard player. The audience can't see what you're doing with your hands at the keyboard, and people do not appreciate it. (Int. 2006)

Bentlage (Int. 2006) also commented that many young women who aspire to perform on stage dream not of being 'at the back playing an instrument' but wish to be 'at the front. They want to be stars. You're not going to be a star playing the keyboards. You'll never have that star status playing an instrument. You *may* become a star playing the sax. You must be upfront!'

Bentlage explained another distinction: that between musicians and vocalists. Musicians are concerned about phrasing, the arrangement, the groove and so on, but 'vocalists don't think

about that'. Vocalists, she muses: 'are actresses. They are divas. They are "what costume am I going to wear, and which earrings am I going to wear with them?" … I often look at vocalists and think: are you here because you like the music, or because you'd like a pat on the back (ibid.)?' This highlights the differing concerns of musicians and vocalists. Kerry Hiles reiterated the idea that vocalists are 'a breed apart' from musicians, a surprising comment coming from a bass guitarist who is also a vocalist (Int. 2007).

While the terms 'singer' and 'vocalist' was used interchangeably, the term 'vocalist' is often favoured in writing about jazz to imply more serious musicianship (see for example Dahl (1984) and Enstice and Stockhouse (2004)). Even within the jazz tradition there appears to be a distinction between the singer as 'an interpreter of lyrics' as American pianist and vocalist Diana Krall describes herself (in Enstice and Stockhouse 2004: 185), and as a 'vocal instrument', American jazz singer and composer Abbey Lincoln' s description (ibid.: 207). This implies an innovating, improvising voice within the music, equal to the instruments.

Singers I spoke to distinguish between themselves, using the dualistic terms 'vocalist' and 'singer', or other terms to convey similar meaning. Celeste Ribeiro, for instance, referred to herself as a 'serious singer' and referred to another well-known singer as 'more of a performer'. Notably she was careful not be critical of this woman. She placed emphasis on the difference in the vocal technique and stage skills between them, echoing the artist/performer dichotomy (Int. 2006).

Vocalist Wendy Twyford vociferously shuns the idea of stardom, preferring to embrace good musicianship:

> I've always said to people I have no aspirations to be a star. Fame and stardom and all those things frighten me. I don't want a part of that. What I want is respect from fellow musicians, and folk that know what works and what doesn't work. I'd far rather have someone say: 'jeepers, she's an awesome vocalist and she's earned her place in musical circles' … as opposed to some ditz [who says]: 'She's beautiful and she can sing *lekker*[106]!' I don't want that! (Int. 2006)

Notably, it is not only instrumentalists who set themselves apart from vocalists, but vocalists who see themselves as being either musicians, or the stars upfront. A recurring theme was voiced: the image of a female 'star' can be negative (evident, for example, in Bentlage's comments above), and, perhaps as a result, most vocalists value being appreciated by their peers as much as by audiences. Ziza Mhlongo, for example, was passionate on this issue,

[106] 'Lekker' is the Afrikaans term for 'nice'.

believing that singers are looked down upon. In her own music-making she constantly strives to 'absorb as much as possible' musically. 'Somewhere behind it' she explains, 'is the driving feeling that as a female artist, a *singer* in any context – maybe not in opera but even there perhaps the conductors think: "Hmph! Singers, oh my God!" – I must try to be better, and to show the world and the musicians that I'm not just a singer' (Int. 2010).

These dichotomies between performer and artist, music and product, up front or background roles on the performance stage, stars and musicians, musicians and singers and singers and vocalists, became evident in the interviews. Each dualism or dichotomy reveals not only a value judgment on which role is preferable, but an identification with the chosen role. Notably, women who are active in more background performance roles, were less emotive and more objective on the different roles performers assume, even though their careers also involve fulfilling performance roles (Bentlage Int. 2006; Int. Neethling 2006).

Confidence, musical identity and music-making

Moving on from issues of self-representation in musical creativity and performance, this section describes more personal facets of music-making and musical identities. Such aspects include confidence, self-image, aspirations and achievements. It is the *music-making experience*, not the *music that they make* that is the focus of this discussion.

Returning briefly to the quotations at the start of this chapter, and also referring to the many quotations used throughout the sections in this chapter, it is notable that each woman has a different idealistic concept of how she can 'be a musician', and strive to meet her ideals as performer or artist, yet inevitably she meets with various choices and challenges in her professional life. Despite any modesty of expression, each musician, to achieve the success she desires, must trust in herself and her musical skills—and this raises the issue of confidence. Self-management at the most complicated level can necessitate deep psychological awareness and control, however many practical issues can be involved as well. Solutions and ways to gain confidence perhaps begin with fairly practical decisions such as choice of instrument, musical direction, clothing and so on, but each issue brings with it some anxiety.

For instance, Cathy del Mei (Int. 2006) was startlingly honest when asked how she chose the saxophone as her instrument. Her greatest dream from her early youth was 'to be a pop star'. 'I can't sing!' she joked:

> So I always wanted to sing, and for me the next best thing was to play sax. The main thing is that it gave me the freedom to be the front person that I really wanted to be. Which was quite something coming from me being a shy, insecure little girl. I've done a complete turnaround, but the sax gave me … how do you say it? The sax set me on my path to now being able to do what I do. (ibid.)

On confidence on stage, she said: 'If you are insecure in anyway about what you are wearing, it comes through, and people see that, and think: "Oh god, she looks uncomfortable", but if you are standing there, owning that stage and comfortable in your skin and your clothes, it goes a long way (ibid.).' Del Mei's statement emphasises the importance of projecting confidence. Overweight as a teenager and young adult, body issues plagued her confidence in her youth. When I asked her directly if the comfort and confidence she obviously nowadays enjoys on stage (as a slim, glamorous woman) can be attributed to her improved body image, she answered an unequivocal 'yes' (Int. 2006).

Several other women openly described negative confidence issues in their youth. Despite Elena Zlatkova's intensive classical music training in her native Bulgaria, she relates 'they didn't teach me how to be confident on stage' and described her early music-making as fraught with nerves, including physically shaking that hindered her musicality. A common experience for young musicians, the fear of performing was reiterated many times (Lubbe Int. 2005; Mailula Int. 2006; Mortimer Int. 2006; van der Merwe Int. 2006), but often continues into adulthood. Vicky Goddard (Int. 2006), for instance, described being 'terrified' the first times she played popular music as a soloist with the Natal Festival Orchestra, and also with the Johannesburg Festival Orchestra: 'I felt like a little child on the first day of school, like a rabbit caught in the headlights. I remember thinking: these people are such pros!' and yet playing with an orchestra was a dream achieved for her.

Performance does become easier, even if self-doubt does not entirely recede (Lubbe Int. 2005; Insinger Int. 2006; Mortimer Int. 2006; Zlatkova Int. 2006), Goddard explains her philosophy of performance:

> Now I think I've got to the stage where I'm a bit older and I think, look, this is the way I play, and if people don't like it, then I won't be hired. But as you get older, and you mature, and the more experience you have, you kind of say: well this is who I am, and if you don't like it, don't hire me, and if you do hire me, I'll do it to the best of my ability. I think I've grown in that respect, because I always used to doubt. (Int. 2006)

Bass guitarist Kerry Hiles echoes Goddard's sentiment:

> My thing is that I wouldn't actually be here for the job if I wasn't good enough, and I don't care what other people think. I'd rather let my actions speak louder than words. If I jump up and down and give a feminist display, they take you even less seriously. I'd rather just play. If it's not good enough, then fine, and if it is, then great, go make me a cup of coffee, thanks. If I wasn't good enough, no one would have called me for that thing, so that's fine. That's my attitude on it, right or wrong. (Int. 2006)

Hiles has a quiet, unassuming confidence. She is aware that being a female bass player challenges stereotypes.

Like Hiles, saxophonist Abbey Artico has faced stereotypes about women playing traditionally-male instruments. In her early career in musical theatre, she was instructed to move like another female saxophonist who she described as 'very sexual on stage' (Artico Int. 2006). 'She used to do these pelvic thrusts and the audience used to go wild'. Yet Artico felt false adopting these mannerisms:

> And then one day I just thought: 'fuck this, I'm not doing this anymore; this is not me' and I was just myself on stage. Suddenly the applause just went from 10% to 200%. I just literally am myself on stage. I don't try to be anybody else. If you watch a show with me in it, you'll come away feeling that you know a bit more about me or know me a little bit. (ibid.)

Confidence for Abbey Artico came not from attuning herself to the female stereotype of a sexy woman on stage playing the saxophone that the theatre management asked of her, but from 'being herself'. Projecting an authentic identity on stage is crucial to her.

An interesting twist came from vocalist Claire Johnston who describes confidence as fluctuating at various stages of her career (Int. 2006). Confidence 'doesn't necessarily go all the way down' she explains. 'I think in life we go through phases of confidence and uncertainty, and I think we change all the time … and we're questioning all the time, which I think is very healthy, but not very comfortable!' Ironically, she explained, she was very confident as a little girl who desperately desired to sing: 'I'm absolutely fascinated at my brazenness, and my lack of fear! I didn't stop and think; I just *did*!' As an adult, however, she explains that she still 'gets quite terrified performing' and attributes this largely to the fact that she does not 'do enough of it':

> The fatal thing I find is thinking too much. You mustn't think too much. Don't think! That's when I get in to trouble: if I think too much, then suddenly lyrics are gone … It's a funny thing. I find it fascinating: this desire to perform. It's something I didn't used to question. It used to come to me just so naturally and easily, and unselfconsciously. But now that I've got older, I've started to think about it. I went through a stage of thinking only dysfunctional people want to perform, so what's wrong with me? (ibid.)

She openly discussed self-esteem issues she has had to 'battle with'. Of one point in her career, she said 'I just didn't feel good about myself in any way, and almost melted down. But I definitely turned a corner on that, and I won't ever go there again. But it's scary. You

can absolutely terrify yourself'. To Johnston, the most serious issue is: 'I'm so fearful of making mistakes now!' Her candour surprised me, especially coming from such a successful and well-regarded musician. Significantly she explains that the issue is not just about performing (where she invariably feigns confidence even if she does not feel it) but lies deeper in her ability to be creative:

> I've got all these ideas that I want to explore, and I don't do anything about them, because I'm scared … and that just seems wrong. It's as if I'm allowing several negative experiences to *colour* what has largely been a wonderful career so far. Do you know what I mean? I've largely been successful and fortunate, and it's as if I'm not maximising on that! And I've so frustrated myself with that, but I'm feeling like I've come out of a very dark tunnel. And at the same time I must just get on with it! (2006)

Confidence issues have also plagued other women's music-making. Pam Mortimer, for instance, described how she suffered from a crisis in confidence after she left her first marriage, where her music-making was a serious tension. Her husband had been her teacher and the relationship was fraught with possessiveness and domination. Having played together, Mortimer (Int. 2006) felt 'terrified of playing with anyone else' after her divorce, even when she had made the decision to pursue her music professionally. Yet she persevered: 'eventually I steeled myself' and started instrumental lessons with a professional jazz saxophonist and teacher, and gigging professionally. Gradually I got my confidence back.'

Several women suffered voice problems which set them back. Pam Mortimer experienced problems with her singing voice, which she believes stem from lack of confidence. Contrary to Cathy del Mei, she describes herself as 'an instrumentalist who always wanted to sing'. Several other vocalists described problems with their voices. At age twenty in her very early career with Mango Groove, Claire Johnston describes how 'for a whole year, I couldn't sing. That was a terrible, terrible time. Mango [Groove] went through a stage of performing on their own without me, just instrumentals … that's how they began, after all, but it was a very painful time for me' (Int. 2006). After consulting various specialists over the course of this year, she underwent a tonsillectomy, during which several nodules were accidentally removed. With her singing voice in crisis after this, she attended lessons with a well-known classical singing teacher who declared 'oh, you'll never sing again!' All this happened six weeks before the recording of Mango Groove's debut album. 'I can still listen to that album and hear that I'm not quite right. There's a hesitance and a tension … I can just hear that the confidence isn't quite there' (ibid.). Similarly, Celeste Ribeiro 'got nodules' which she

attributes to lack of experience and 'bad monitoring'[107] when singing in a loud rock band at age nineteen:

> I went for lessons after that, just to try to help me place my voice correctly. Even now, I talk slightly from here before I used to talk from down there [lowering her voice]. Even now, as soon as I am tired, my voice goes to my sinuses, so it just taught me how to place my voice better, and how to breathe. I probably had about four proper lessons doing that, you know, but it was definitely just a natural thing. It's a muscle, and they say the more you use it, the better it becomes. That is without a doubt the best thing you can do with your voice, is just to sing and sing and sing. (Int. 2006)

Saxophonist and vocalist Franka Insinger explained that she 'never thought that I had a good voice because, every year, since I was little, I would lose my voice for about a month. In wintertime, my voice would be gone. Especially in South Africa, my voice just disappeared. So from when I was little, I had problems with my voice' (Int. 2006). This was a motivating factor in deciding to learn the saxophone.

Vocalist Ayanda Nhlangothi (Int. 2006) spoke of confidence in the different context of business, of feeling 'very nervous' as she embarked on a recording career, 'because I've always done music but I've never signed in a company.' With others asserting control over her creativity (what musicians to hire, where to record, what budget was granted, who will produce an album and so on), she developed confidence in dealing with the business side of music by consulting and working with people she trusted. 'From the beginning I had to find people that I could work with, as everybody comes in with their own agendas'. Reflecting on these issues, she said:

> I don't think it gets easier, and I'm not speaking from experience, because I don't think I have had that much experience to really understand what our legends have gone through, and what they are still going through now. But just from seeing and observing how things are in the industry, seeing how even a legend like Ma Dorothy Masuku had moments where she would physically go to a company to tell them to pay her! She did a job and they didn't pay her, and she doesn't have a representative; she represents herself. It makes you wonder: are we getting any better? I mean, at least pay the legends first! And it's not the first time she had to do that – it's been happening for years. So that's when I realized: so who am I? But it doesn't have to be like that. *We* have a chance to actually change the whole cycle … by being open, even in the face of the whole industry and not hiding because you are desperate. Never ever be desperate! (Int. 2006)

Nhlangothi's statement expresses not only an understanding of the historically exploitative recording industry in South Africa, but the desire for alternative methods of managing such situations in order to change these patterns of past control and power. She spoke openly of finding confidence in her musical family's experience of the music industry and their advice on how to handle various situations. This again reveals the vital issue of support for young women beginning their musical careers.

[107] In amplified situations, singers and instrumentalists hear their voice or instrument through a monitor in front of them on stage.

I argue that these female musicians, like many professional women, struggle with issues of confidence. Self-image can play a part but performance issues are greater, involving self-management in different situations (as for Vicky Goddard, Kerry Hiles, Abbey Artico and Ayanda Nhlangothi), as well as privately (for Claire Johnston).

Solo artists

The issues of confidence mentioned above are interesting in the light of my interviewees' aspirations to be solo artists or not. Certain women expressly refused to entertain the idea of being a solo artist: it held no appeal, seemed unrealistic or was outside the frame of their music-making (Lubbe Int. 2005; Mortimer Int. 2006; Neethling Int. 2006; O'Hanlan Int. 2006; van der Merwe Int. 2006). Some did not feel confident enough (yet) (Lebabo Int. 2006), or were reticent to record (del Mei Int. 2006; Mortimer Int. 2006), or have been trying to pursue becoming a solo artist with no break through yet (Mbali Int. 2006). Some were pragmatic: they would love the opportunity, but are aware of the difficulties involved in getting a recording deal (Hiles Int. 2006; Insinger Int. 2006; Mhlongo Int. 2010; Ribeiro Int. 2006; Twyford Int. 2006). Others are young musicians and not yet sure of their career trajectory (Clacherty Int. 2007; Malebye Int. 2007). Other women are already solo artists, whether they began their careers by pursuing this goal (Levine Int. 2006; Nhlangothi Int. 2006; Nokwe Int. 2006), or had ended up there through other experiences of music-making (Birkholtz Int. 2010; Mailula Int. 2012; Makuzeni Int. 2006; Mowday Int. 2007; Johnston Int. 2006).

This discussion was not about the business routes to becoming a solo artist or the various aspects of the music industry involved.[108] While not all the women I interviewed are well-

[108] To most musicians, the various parameters of the music industry are common knowledge: being signed to a record company or recording music independently, the recording process, negotiating publishing and licensing deals, distribution, marketing, mechanical rights, performance rights, performing live and so on. So too is knowledge about the roles others play in a successful solo artist's career (whether an artist assumes some of these roles or not): studio engineer, producer, A&R manager, personal, business and/or road manager, agent, publicist, event organizer or fixer, etcetera, as well as the changing nature of the music industry as South Africa catches up with the rest of the global music industry and becomes increasingly affected by the digital age (Ansell 2007: 25). This information is readily available elsewhere in publications (Shaw 2007), and reports online (Ansell 2007: 5, 7, 19 and 46; 'Mapping of the …' 2010) and not the focus of this research project. Kristel Birkholtz asserts that many musicians do not adequately understand the value-chain of the music

informed on all aspects of the value-chain of the music industry (some are very business-orientated and entrepreneurial, others less so), certainly all negotiate their place within it. My focus here, rather, is on articulating issues of identity.

As explained in Chapter One, this project does not focus on the 'most famous' women musicians, those who have contributed the most cultural 'value' to music-making in South Africa (although many have). Rather than focus on the 'star' musicians or the 'greats' of South African women musicians, I was interested in the experience and perspective of other professional women musicians and the insights these offered. Very few of my women interviewees had idealised ideas about becoming 'stars', 'solo artists' or about leading their own creative projects. Instead they generally spoke about the skills and challenges involved in managing their careers, being bandleaders and working with other musicians (Insinger Int. 2006; Johnston Int. 2006; Levine Int. 2006; Makuzeni Int. 2010; Nhlangothi Int. 2006; Nokwe Int. 2006; Mowday Int. 2007; Mhlongo Int. 2010; Mailula Int. 2012).

For example, Shannon Mowday was the recipient of the highly prestigious Standard Bank Young Artist of the Year award in 2007. When I asked her whether she had always envisioned becoming a solo artist, she responded:

> No! I think that the entire reason I do what I do is simply because I have a striving nature. I want to better myself. I've ended up being a solo artist, but there are times, I promise you … I think 'can't I just be a band member?' and 'I don't want to take responsibility'. Because it's not only the playing, it's taking care of your band, making sure they're together … writing, arranging, etc. I don't have a manager: I don't have anybody. I'm pulling my hair out because I just can't keep up at the moment. But that kind of thing: you have to have a certain disposition, or develop a certain disposition because otherwise you're just not going to survive. If I was *slapgat* [sloppy], I wouldn't be as good as I am. You know, it's all part of my personality. If I were in another profession, it would [still] be my personality. It's not that I'm going: 'hey, I want to be the top', it's that I'm going 'I want to make the best version of me that is possible'. I still practise six hours a day if I can when I'm not teaching, when I'm not cluttered with rubbish, but that is my personal thing. I happen to be a musician, my communication happens to be music, but it's not necessarily that I intended being a solo artist. (Int. 2007)

This statement is not only a revealing statement about the hard work and skill involved in managing a career as a solo artist, but is also a revealing one about identity. She describes winning the award as 'not necessarily for me. It is for all those people who have been a part of my growth'.[109] The joy of becoming a solo artist, to Mowday, is not stardom or fame, but

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industry and her research aims to better equip them with this knowledge (Birkholtz 2010: 18, 20, 26, 44, 84, and 86).

[109] This statement is extraordinarily similar to that made by female jazz bass player, vocalist and composer Esperanza Spalding on receipt of her Grammy award in 2011. Unprecedented for a jazz musician, she won 'Best Newcomer' across all genres. When asked what the 'single best result of winning the Grammy has been': 'Well, the spot light is sort of shining on me, and since I don't exist alone – I'm not a floating free agent – all

that of artistic achievement: 'If it means that I can have more of a voice, *that* is what is important to me' (Int. 2007).

Elsewhere, Mowday reiterates her philosophy:

> There is a great line from *Zen, and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance,* which is 'gumption is the psychic gasoline which keeps it all going'. And I've had to stick to that. I think my talent is in my work ethic…just that I'm prepared to stick to it until I get there. I know a lot of talented people that just let their talents fall by the wayside, and I'm not prepared to do that. (ibid.)

'My talent is in my work ethic' is a powerful statement. Becoming an accoladed solo artist was not by chance for Mowday: years of practice were involved. She reveals another aspect of this: 'I've been on this road, and it is a lonely road. And just to have somebody go: "hey, we're acknowledging what you're doing", that means a lot to me … At some point somebody's going to actually recognize what you're doing' (ibid.). Mowday may in part be referring to the loneliness of the musician who must practise for hours each day, and for years, to achieve the level of artistry and musical technique that can sustain an international solo career. However, I interpret that she is also speaking about the loneliness of being a female jazz soloist. In our interview, she spoke candidly about battling against the stereotypes concerning female saxophonists (explored further in Chapter Four) and her strategies for coping: 'I have a hard shell, I've had to create a hard shell, because you cannot get by in this industry…if you're going to play, and if you're going to make a statement, because as a person, as a musician you make a strong statement and that's what I have been doing. It really hasn't been easy' (ibid.).

Likewise, Claire Johnston had the difficulty in defining herself as a solo artist after the many years fronting Mango Groove. She explains that when she recorded her first solo album *Fearless* (2001), she felt it '*had* to be different. I'd been with *Mango* for seventeen years, and I needed to shake myself up a bit, so it was a total experiment … I felt the need to totally reinvent myself' (Int. 2006). In 2006, when I interviewed Johnston, her second solo album, *Africa Blue* (2005), had just been released into a box-set together with her first, *Fearless,* called *The One and Only Claire Johnston* (2006). She reflected:

> And it's nice for me, it's wonderful, because hopefully it means revenue for me, but it's all very nice psychologically, because it puts my past solo albums together in a nice way and it links them, and it

these people and forces and music and bands and influences that I am connected with – at least the edges of them are getting illuminated too. So I guess the value in winning the Grammy so *far*, has been bringing some of that spotlight around. Like being in Portland now has attracted you here [referring to her television interviewers], but also people to these benefit concerts this week. So this spotlight will also hopefully illuminate really important programming and educational needs that may not have been getting the light they deserved.' ('Esperanza Spalding …' 2011: n.p.).

> leaves me free to move forward and to think about the future as opposed to thinking about these two very different-sounding albums. (Int. 2006)

Johnston was struggling to find a solo identity after being with 'a band as strong as Mango [Groove]' (ibid.). She considered many styles of music but commented that:

> people don't want you to dabble in all sorts of styles! They want you to be what they're used to you being, and I can understand that … so I went through a stage of wanting to really break away from the Mango Groove thing, and I've totally gone full circle: I've come back to seeing the power of Mango [Groove] and how amazing it is, and how much fun we actually have on stage. (ibid.)

She explained the joy for her in performing within the powerful big band sound and stage routines of Mango Groove. She described being 'intimate and real' in 'unplugged', smaller situations as less appealing: 'when you cut your teeth on being in a ten or eleven piece band, you get scared of going more personal. I want to look there and see the B.B.s [backing singers] and there's Duzi and Donny, and there's Neil, and John, Harold and Thokozo … everyone's there and I'm not on my own (ibid.)!'

Different perspectives came from women who have not yet succeeded in becoming solo artists. Saxophonist Ndithini Mbali in 2006, for instance, financed the recording of her debut album herself, yet was battling to secure the interest of record companies or radio stations (at the time of writing it is still not released). She spoke of the difficulties of recording this album, and has challenges in making a living: 'I'm going to keep going. But there are times when I feel: '*eish*, maybe I must just *find a job*, you know, and just pause a little bit from the playing and look for a job, you know?' Ziza Mhlongo (Int. 2010) found to it very challenging move away from performing on the gig scene to writing her own material, managing a pop band and fronting it. She described the desire to make a change musically as a process within herself of always seeking change: 'It happens every time I'm comfortable, I shift completely. I can't be comfortable! I can't, I can't. I *completely* shoot myself in the foot!' Like Claire Johnston, she struggles to redefine herself musically despite confidence in her ability:

> I don't feel this urge to be there so that other people can see me, but I do feel that I am good at what I do, and that people should see what I have to offer … I do know that I have something about me. It's not about singing, it is not. There is something about me—the ability to speak to everyone you know: brats, … *troubled* children, adults, [people from] different backgrounds … so I do feel it is my duty to teach and to perform. The problem with me is that I am still trying to define myself. I can't call myself a jazz artist. That's what I listen to, but I didn't study it. But I don't know what to call myself. (2010)

Singer-songwriter, Laurie Levine feels confident in her musical style, yet is frustrated by people's wish to 'box' her into an existing musical genre:

> I think I am original in that I don't neatly fit into pop, I don't neatly fit into folk, adult contemporary, folk or blues. I think there's a crossover that perhaps not a lot of other musicians do have. I could be wrong about that, but from what I can see, and it can be to my advantage, it can be to my disadvantage. I'm not sure which way it's going to go at this point, you know. Because sometimes you are: I'm this, then…You've heard my album, I'm not sure what genre you would put me in? I call it contemporary folk. It's just a way of defining it. The guy helping me, Adrian King, he's developing something called NuFolk and I think that's where I fit in. (Int. 2006)

Similarly, when I interviewed Ayanda Nhlangothi in 2006 just as she had finished recording her debut album, she said of her music: 'It's colourful, but I'm curious to see what category people think I fall into, because I don't know yet!' Echoing Levine's comment, she added: 'Well I think it helps as an artist to really research what you are doing, because here at home they make the huge mistake of categorising people the wrong way. You know you find someone who is doing a jazz album, and they put them under R 'n B, and then it gets a bit confusing' (Int. 2006).

Conclusion

This chapter has provided many facets about how the women musicians to whom I spoke consider their identities within their professional music-making. I have discussed the influence on identity-awareness of a number of pressures, particularly within themes of race, sexuality, age, place, stage performance, musical artistry, confidence, and solo performance. Through the many quotations used in discussing issues covered by these categories or themes, my intention has been to illustrate the variety of attitudes and responses to these experiential complications in the musical and personal lives of the women musicians—sometimes positive and supportive, sometimes problematic, and sometimes deeply complicating an individual's professional experience and self-awareness. Inevitably my separate discussion of each of these categories only helps to gain particular insights within the broad focus of experiences of identity. The wider view of identity includes vision and knowledge, strength of will, determination and idealistic and practical problem-solving for each of the women musicians in her own way—so identity involves self-creativity. To return to the quotations at the head of this chapter, Alcoff iterates that identity is 'a construction and point of departure'; Storr states that identity is 'a creative act'. As Johnston states above, 'we change all the time…and we're questioning all the time which I think is very healthy, but not very comfortable!'

A recurrent theme in this chapter is the idea that music performance serves as a tool in the identity construction of these women's imagined selves. The most striking identity issues that these performers experience as a consequence of their femaleness are how they deal with not only their own but also *others'* perceptions about their age, sexuality, cultural and musical roots in professional situations with colleagues and, more particularly, in the public eye. The ethnographic evidence given as well as my interpretations of what sometimes remained unsaid and why, support the idea that these women are aware that their artistic integrity and popular support may be undermined if they stray too far from conventional perceptions about what women are, should be, can offer and should look like. The ethnographic evidence also revealed differing responses from women, particularly with regards to confidence and creativity. From both Tu Nokwe and Shannon Mowday, certainly two of the best known of my respondents in the public sphere, came a sense that achieving artistic goals as a woman can be hard, even when one is acknowledged and celebrated. From statements made by other women, it is evident that creative output and control are very much affected by confidence and self-image, and not just musical ability.[110]

The women I interviewed are acutely aware of how they are perceived by the public, and that the reception of their musicianship, music, and image often differs from how they perceive themselves or wish their music to be received. This is an issue to which I now turn in Chapter Four where I explore ways in which cultural expectations and discourse also influence the construction of identity.

[110] An interesting confirmation that identity can be regarded differently in the private and public spheres is evident in South African singer Lira's choice to have a stage name. Born Lerato Molapo, she is known as 'Lerato' in her personal life, but to the South African public she is 'Lira'. She chooses for there to be a distinct split in her public and personal identities.

CHAPTER FOUR
SIRENS AND SONGBIRDS: HOW WOMEN NEGOTIATE STEREOTYPES

'I'm always looked at, but I'm never looked into'.
—BRENDA FASSIE (SABC documentary 2005)

'There is definitely fraternity, but I'm not sure if there is sisterhood'.
—ZIZA MHLONGO (Int. 2010)

'If we do not change our consciousness, we cannot change our actions or demand change from others ... we must first learn how to be in solidarity, how to struggle with one another.'
—BELL HOOKS (in Kolmar and Bartkowski 2005: 468)

I begin this chapter with several analyses of written texts drawn from both non-academic and scholarly literature. These serve to illuminate some of the stereotypes about women in music that exist before my ethnographic evidence is brought to bear on the argument. In *Stars, Bars & Guitars*, music critic Jon Monsoon writes of his first experience watching South African band Supernature live in concert: 'Truth is, I know very little about this band. I know that the lead singer [Jacquie Stecher] is tall and female and quite possibly pretty too. I don't remember where she is from. I've heard that she likes to play her guitar with a beer bottle. (Ooh, that's so hot!) That's enough' (2008: 41). A page later, he expands this thought:

> Fact no. 1: There are few things in life more appealing to the male eye than the lithe form of a babe in boots whispering rock's obscenities into a microphone whilst cradling a big red bass guitar. The way this girl handles her bass is so beautiful it borders on pornographic, as if this instrument is somehow an extension of her very being or, better yet, a lover. (ibid.: 42)

As a music critic Monsoon's reactions are barely less crass than the shouts, that he reports, of 'Show us your tits!' from Supernature's audience to Stecher that night as the performance ended (ibid.: 43). As is evident, Monsoon's is not an academic book. It does, however, provide insights into male rock audiences and culture. Women musicians hardly feature in Monsoon's book; mention is only made of lead singers Michelle Breeze of Fetish (ibid.: 84-86); Inge Beckmann of Lark—whose voice he describes as able 'to tease the internal anatomy—places not normally reached by music' (ibid.: 133); and of the 'cute girl

drummer' (Annette McLennan) who played for No Friends of Harry (ibid.: 17). In addition, a few photos of female singers in the section on *kwaito* are included, and there is repeated mention of 'blonde Swedish waitresses' (ibid.: 97 and 98). In contrast the book is resplendent with machismo descriptions of rock 'n roll, 'chemical' and 'herbally-inspired clarification' (drugs), youthful misdemeanor, late nights, beer and hangovers (ibid.: 41). The 'misogyny of rock', to use interviewee Laurie Levine's term (see page 47 in Chapter Two) is not simply evident throughout Monsoon's book but celebrated in his proudly scopophilic instincts.[111]

Embodiment

In her discussion of visual pleasure and narrative cinema, feminist film theorist Laura Mulvey describes how we operate in a world ordered by sexual imbalance where pleasure in looking is split between the male spectator as subject (men actively looking, engaged in voyeurism) and female spectacle as object (women passively being looked at):

> The determining male gaze projects its phantasy on to the female figure which is styled accordingly. In their traditional exhibitionist role women are simultaneously looked at and displayed, with their appearance coded for strong visual and erotic impact so that they can be said to connote *to-be-looked-at-ness*. Woman displayed as sexual object is the leit-motif of erotic spectacle: from pin-ups to strip-tease, from Ziegfeld to Busby Berkeley, she holds the look, plays to and signifies male desire. (Kolmar and Bartowski 2005: 299; see also Burns and Lafrance 2002: 75)

This male gaze is clearly exemplified by Monsoon's statements. Not only does his 'male eye' reduce the singer to a sexual body on stage, he revels in his phantasy.[112] There is obviously extraordinary delight in witnessing a female perform what he considers male functions within music, as she whispers 'rock's obscenities' (rock and its lyrics are male domain) and cradles 'a big red bass guitar' (the ultimate 'cock rock'[113] image that signifies aggressive masculinity and sexuality). Indeed, rock music is, in Monsoon's unquestioning

[111] Scopophilia is the pleasure in looking at another person as an erotic object. Freud isolated scopophilia 'as one of the component instincts of sexuality which exist as drives quite independently of the erotogenic zones' (Kolmar and Bartowski 2005: 298).

[112] Here I deliberately use the spelling 'phantasy' (rather than 'fantasy') to intend association with the concept in psychology and psychiatry.

[113] The term 'cock rock' was coined in an influential article on the construction of adolescent gender roles in relation to rock and popular music by Simon Frith and Angela McRobbie (1978: 3), and 'conveys neatly the phallic urgency of masculine representations in much rock' (Scott 2000: 61). Richard Middleton summarizes the concept: 'Sex-role stereotypes (where boys are seen as aggressive, dominating, group-orientated, phallocentric, and girls as passive, serious, romantic, privatist, domestic) are said to be articulated in the music in terms of two ideal types, to which all rock styles relate: "cock rock" and "teenybop" rock therefore operates as both a form of sexual expression and as a form of sexual control' (1990: 237-8). Mavis Bayton makes a play on this rock phrase in the title of her book *Frock Rock* (1998).

view, a male domain, what Sheila Whitely has described as the 'brotherhood of rock' (2000: 60).[114]

This example of sexist thinking and writing about women in music (in this instance South African white rock) clearly reveals the issue of how women are embodied on stage: Monsoon sees Stecher's body as a site of sexuality, pleasure and phantasy. There is no further comment on her musicality, artistry or performance. She merely epitomises a sexually-pleasing moment for him in his unproblematic male world of rock. The male gaze (or that of the 'normatively masculine subject')[115] is something contemporary female performers must contend with, in South Africa and elsewhere, and in genres other than rock. This has always been the case for women musicians since the advent of the technological advancement of recording in the 1880s, which brought about the separation of sound from the bodies that create it (disembodiment) and in turn, the apparent evacuation of bodies from the scene of subject-production (Middleton 2006: par. 12).

In Theodor Adorno's extreme argument expounded in 'The Curves of the Needle', he theorises that recordings of the female voice remove the awareness of 'body' (unlike recordings of the male voice).[116] Engh critiques Adorno's argument by applying Simone de Beauvoir's ideas of immanence (the woman embodied, 'confined to the physical body') and transcendence ('the man 'free', his transcendence guaranteed by all the centuries of the

[114] Further to largely excluding women, Monsoon also prioritizes white musicians and bands in this book. Of a hundred and thirty one pages, thirty two deal with black, coloured or multi-racial bands. His 'journey through South African music' mostly explores the music of white South African rock, symptomatic of what I earlier described as the 'ghettoisation' of different styles within the South African music industry.

[115] Jenny Taylor and Dave Laing borrowed Laura Mulvey's theory of 'the male gaze' in their critical response to Simon Frith and Angela McRobbie's article on sexuality in rock, in which they argue against the dangers of essentialism. Derek Scott points out that this theory was ironically 'later accused of essentialism (on the grounds of it being too biological) by gay and lesbian writers.' He suggests the preferable use of the 'normatively masculine subject' (2000: 62).

[116] Theodor Adorno employed a feminine metaphor in the name of this early essay on the phonograph, 'The Curves of the Needle'. He writes: 'Male voices can be reproduced better than female voices. The female voice easily sounds shrill—but not because the gramophone is incapable of conveying high tones, as is demonstrated by its adequate reproduction of the flute. Rather, in order to become unfettered, the female voice requires the physical appearance of the body that carries it. But it is just this body that the gramophone eliminates, thereby giving every female voice a sound that is needy and incomplete. Only there where the body itself resonates, where the self to which the gramophone refers is identical with its sound, only there does the gramophone have its legitimate realm of validity: thus Caruso's uncontested dominance. Wherever sound is separated from the body—as with instruments—or wherever it requires the body as a complement—as is the case with the female voice—gramophonic reproduction becomes problematic (ibid.:129). Engh references this article in a footnote (given here and not in my bibliography): 'Theodor Adorno, "*Nadelkurven*," *Musikblätter des Anbruch* 10 (February 1928), 54; "The Curves of the Needle", trans. Thomas Y. Levin, *October* 55 (Winter 1990), 48-55' (Engh in Burns and Jones 1994: 120 and 128). The same passage is quoted by Simon Frith in *Performing Rites* (Frith 1996: 334).

disembodied phallic voice—of God, Reason, State, Corporation').[117] Middleton suggests that although recording removes the body associated with the voice, yet a listener inevitably conjures up imaginative concepts of body image—'putative' identities as Middleton names these—and he mentions these in terms suggestive of birds, goddesses and sirens (his symbols are avians, cyborgs and sirens) associating these images with the female voice.[118]

What are the visual images, then, as suggested by these putative ideas, one must ask? Such images (birds, goddesses and sirens), when related to female singers or instrumentalists in reality, become coloured by stereotypical attitudes encouraged within a particular social culture: for instance the 'male gaze' culture becomes stereotypical because it is socially encouraged. While acknowledging that not only women are embodied, in stage performances (to the audience as suggested above by Mulvey) or in recordings (in the mind's eye of the listener, as Middleton suggests), I argue that stereotypes about women's embodiment as musicians—both as vocalists and as instrumentalists—are more problematically sexualised than is the case for men. My discussion now continues with consideration of ways in which female vocalists are embodied in social thinking and written comment, and conversely, with the strategies of self-representation that some women musicians choose. Thereafter I turn to the issues of embodiment for women instrumentalists.

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[117] Barbara Engh explains that Adorno here 'claims that a woman's singing voice cannot be recorded well, because it demands the presence of her body. A man's voice is able to carry on in the absence of his body, because his self is identical to his voice; his body disappears' (Engh in Dunn and Jones 1994: 120). Engh's critique of Adorno's (sexist) meaning is achieved through reference to the ideas of immanence and transcendence, but this forms only one part of her analysis of Adorno; she also draws on a psychoanalytical feminist model derived from Kaja Silverman in *The Acoustic Mirror* (ibid.: 130), and Fredric Jameson's writing on Adorno and Marxism (ibid.: 131-2) to broaden her exploration of the problem of the woman's voice (in Adorno's discussion of the phonograph) to include 'the Siren, the singing woman as a problem' (ibid.: 121 and 132-5). In turn, Richard Middleton incorporates Engh's argument into his discussion on embodiment and gender in recordings. He paraphrases Engh succinctly: 'the phonographic machine, in a sort of Lacanian mirror-phase procedure, acts as the ideal form of the male body – it is, in Adorno's words, "the sounding image of his own person", records being "sounding photographs of their owners"; and the male's disavowal of loss—of his "castration"—is made bearable through his demand that the female performing body fill in for his lack' (2006: par. 10).

[118] Richard Middleton suggests that all sounds 'have body' (2006: par. 22). In short, Middleton suggests that 'absolute music' might be called the 'acousmatic fallacy', and that listeners invent an imagined source for all sounds, whether it be anatomical, visual or tactile in a process he suggests 'describes exactly how the sensuous and the symbolic create each other' (ibid.). Middleton's is a complicated argument about the social phenomenology of the record, beyond the scope of this thesis. However, his title does reveal his central strands of investigation into avians (avian metaphors for voices and vocalists), cyborgs (drawing on Donna Haraway's influential feminist statement 'I would rather be a cyborg than a goddess'; the cyborg presents a new category of being beyond gender) and siren bodies (who signify sexualized meaning) in exploring the social dynamics involved in the gendering of the recorded voice. Middleton makes a point that is pertinent to my discussion of embodiment: 'We have long been accustomed to assigning such vocalic bodies to a putative source—an invisible cuckoo, a nightingale in the darkness, a mist-enshrouded foghorn (or siren), the thunder of the gods', and he mentions parrots ('silly reproduction machines') and nightingales ('artless vehicles of nature') as examples of bird species to feature in this discursive tradition (ibid.)

Stereotypes in discourse: divas and songbirds

'Diva' is a term with different connotations both in meaning and usage, and one that encapsulates some of the common problematic perceptions about female singers and musicians. 'Diva' derives from the Italian noun *diva*, a female deity, meaning: 'a distinguished female singer, a prima donna' (Onions 1956: 541). 'Prima donna' translates from Italian as 'first lady', and denotes the first or principal female singer in an opera cast. 'Prima donna' has in common usage acquired the more generalised meaning of a leading woman singer. Hence for the original meaning the term *prima donna assoluta* ('absolute first lady') has been adopted. The same process has occurred in the ballet with the *prima ballerina assoluta*.

So this operatic term, with its linguistic association of the idea of 'goddess'[119] refers to a celebrated female singer of outstanding talent. In opera, the term never referred to a young woman, only ever to a mature singer at the height of her musical and technical prowess. It also carries the negative connotation of a singer who, although great, is often a woman of great temperament, prone to being difficult. For many years used only in the genre of opera, the use of the term has been extended to the theatre, cinema and popular music. Lucy O'Brien describes how the term now 'applies to a leading woman artist in any genre, be it jazz or R&B' (2002: 475). In her discussion of the economic clout that women artists were starting to have in the music industry by the mid-1990s, she explains that 'the word "diva" became a marketing concept, shorthand for international sales and global domination' (ibid.).

The term 'diva' certainly seems a popular one in the South African press, yet it is often used in confusing ways. In a 2006 *Tonight* article, for instance, about emerging singer Puleng, one sees a picture of the very youthful singer on the cover page of this daily newspaper's Entertainment supplement with a large title 'Dawn of a Diva' sub-captioned: 'she's sweet and feminine with a voice from the heavens…Puleng has a date with destiny.' The article that follows is entitled: 'Divine voice without the dreaded diva.' It begins with the following sentence: 'Maybe we need to catch female vocalists at the beginning of their careers, before the fame and adulation turns them into total nightmares' (Owen 2006: 1 and 3). This introduction of a young singer to the public pressures her to become great, but at the same

[119] This term is echoed in other languages, for instance: the Hindi *devi* meaning goddess.

time warns her to remain feminine and pliable—notably stereotypical expectations projected on to an emerging singer. In the article, Puleng is quoted: 'Right now as a solo artist I have only ever performed twice', but gives no evidence that the young singer has any of the negative traits; yet the article furthers its diva theme as Owen sarcastically snipes: 'Let's just hope that she and the people around her not only nurture her talent, but keep her ego in check as well. 'Cos [sic] all the world needs right now, is another diva (ibid.: 3).' This is irrelevant in an article introducing this young singer to the public, and the negative connotations intended through Owen's diva theme are not only unnecessary but not clearly thought through.

In a second example of an article concerned with the idea of the diva, Janine Jellars' 'The Rise of the South African Diva' in *Elle* (2011: 41-4), focuses on South African singers Lira, Simphiwe Dana and Thandiswa Mazwai. Mazwai is quoted as acknowledging the double meanings of the term 'diva': 'Some use [diva] to offend and others to praise,' she says. 'Either way, I'm usually flattered…The word diva has changed meaning, been appropriated and re-appropriated so many times that even I've lost track,' she laughs. 'Whatever the meaning, I accept it because I am an artist who always strives to be a master of my craft and, as a woman, I always know what I want and don't allow anyone to undermine my values' (Jellars 2011: 43). Lira's reaction to the term is tactful and less forceful: 'Lira fully embraces the diva label and says, "For me, a diva is a glam performer who is intriguing and spirited, who brings spunk and energy to the stage and that's what I'm aiming for" ' (ibid.: 42). She carefully sidesteps engaging with the negative associations of the term.

My third example, Percy Mabandu's article on South African jazz singer Tutu Puoane, entitled 'The diva, the hustler', is somewhat different (2009: n.p.). Mabandu charts Puoane's life in music from her early experiences as a child, through her tertiary studies in jazz and notes her achievements, including being 2004 Standard Bank Artist of the Year, performing on three continents, and releasing two solo albums and a third collaborative album with the Brussels Jazz Orchestra. Mabandu's only reference to the idea of diva dispels the thought that Puoane may be one: 'But she is no jazz prima donna. She relishes collaboration with other musicians and says she's inspired by those who are more experienced, such as the Brussels Jazz Orchestra—a seventeen-piece big band—with which she's worked since 2004' (ibid.). My interpretation is that a sub-editor gave this article its title, for certainly nothing in Mabandu's article suggests he would have chosen it. 'The hustler' after 'the diva' must refer

to the article's byline: 'Belgium-based Tutu Puoane has come home to scrounge for venues to gig at this coming spring.' The headline is a catchy phrase to attract the readers eye; little thought seems to have been given to the negative stereotypes implied: the 'uppity' connotation of 'diva' and the shady character of 'hustler' and 'scrounge'.

While this is simply a headline in a daily newspaper, it nonetheless reveals stereotypical thinking. Percy Mabandu cannot be blamed for his use of 'prima donna' or the copy-editor's possible use of 'diva' (or 'hustler'). Even though he does not feel Puoane is a 'difficult' diva, he is compelled to mention her in relation to whether or not she is a prima donna—as if all female vocalists *must* be referred to in this way. The stereotype remains in his thinking as it were: he regards Puoane highly as an artist, yet there is no other term of reference with which to replace the positive connotation of diva (without its accompanying negative connotation). What, then, is the alternative term to use then? I venture an answer to this question at the end of this section.

The examples above reveal how, in the popular print media, firstly, stereotypical thinking is not unique to men (note the evidence in Theresa Owen's writing); secondly, that not all men are misogynists (Percy Mabandu's writing); thirdly, that there is a prevalence of stereotypes about women musicians (Jellar's article names three young artists as divas and requires their comment on being identified in this stereotypical way), and fourthly that Mabandu's for the most part non-stereotypical article is given a stereotypical title (whether by a sub-editor or to attract readership). In the first and third examples, the differing reception of each woman musician is described (all being singers as it so happens in this discussion), while in the second example, the women themselves make comment on such stereotypical definitions.[120]

This uncritical use of the term diva in the context of South African popular music is more surprising in academic David Coplan's second edition to his influential book *In Township Tonight!* A short section on women musicians begins thus:

> Or take the situation of today's songbirds, now called 'divas', whether of the 'jazz diva' or 'pop diva' category. Interestingly, there are only a very few male jazz vocalists with a commanding reputation in Johannesburg, and women dominate the field of song. At the top of the list surely must come Sibongile Khumalo, daughter of University of Zululand professor and national music mentor Khabi Mngoma. (Coplan 2008: 347)

[120] However, I speculate that while their comments reveal some identification with the term as well as some distancing, their statements are possibly tempered by knowing it is just these types of articles that contribute to their public persona and popularity.

Coplan's own choice of the gender-stereotyped term 'songbirds' is revealing, and he replicates use of the term ' jazz diva' without examining who calls these women divas or why (ibid.: 347-349). His understanding of the term's opera derivation seems less precise in the way he applies the term: he praises Sibongile Khumalo's training and technique which allows her to sing such a broad range of styles, including opera and, on the next page, uses reference to opera to disparage Bosman's reputation: 'Gloria Bosman, who enjoyed great success early on with jazz interpretations of local African songs, is presently so caught up in complex, self-conscious attempts at vocal ornamentation that one knows not what to make of her performances. Perhaps it was that scholarship to study opera that distorted her musical judgment' (ibid.: 348).

In reference to two singers who he obviously admires, Sibongile Khumalo and Thandiswa Mazwai, his introduction to both women includes mention of men to whom they are related (their fathers in both instances). Yet neither woman's career nor artistic reputation rests on their being the 'daughter of…' (Coplan 2008: 347). Similarly, Judith Sephuma is introduced along with mention of 'the presence of her children's father' as producer and guitarist on her debut album (Coplan 2008: 348). As one of South Africa's most successful and well-regarded female singers, Sephuma's career has been unaffected by her subsequent divorce from Salaelo Selota.

Coplan's writing also unwittingly reveals an important issue that has confronted many female musicians: the popular expectation that women on stage should be glamorous, attractive and sexually appealing. He describes Zamajobe Sithole as a 'beautiful, coolly self-assured young lady with a glamorous dress sense most unusual for a South African jazz diva. Her music tends towards the more popular style of the romantic ballad, and less towards the complexities of jazz, but she gets audiences eating out of the palm of her hand…' (Coplan 2008: 349). In his description of his own and the audiences' appreciation of her beauty and style, there is also the slight implication that her smooth jazz is acceptably uncomplicated or technical because she is so kind on the eye. A public often expects a female artist's looks and behaviour to be as important as her artistic talent, but it is disappointing to see such expectation uncritically reproduced in the sentiments of an academic writer. My criticism of a brief passage in an arguably sound and well-regarded text may be seen as nitpicking, but this example reveals how stereotypical thinking is reinforced when gender issues are not

critically considered.[121] Feminist thinking, however, is deeply critical of the male gaze, which would include Coplan's spectatorial approach.

On the other hand, Coplan is not unaware of some of the issues that face female musicians:

> …On the less promising side, women in South African jazz are still largely confined to the role of vocalist, occasionally playing the piano but no other instruments apart from the exception that proves the rule, trombonist (and of course, vocalist) Siya Makuzeni of Carlo Mombelli's avant-garde Prisoners of Strange. Siya is unusual playing a 'man's instrument' in an otherwise male ensemble. (ibid.)

He raises the issue of the difficulty in sustaining a career as a female instrumentalist: 'Female horn players most often take refuge from male prejudice in all female groups such as Ladies in Jazz, an all-women ensemble including bass and lead guitars, keyboards, drum kit, and saxophone, providing a jazz backing for beautiful Zulu vocals sung in the indigenous tonality' (ibid.). Coplan ends his three-page discussion of women in the contemporary South African music scene here and begins the next paragraph: 'Moving back then to the men…' (ibid.). A three-page section on women musicians in a book of 455 pages is a metaphor for the extremely limited space women are afforded in some male thinking. Notably, while he recognises male prejudice as a factor in women choosing to work in all-women bands with the risk of being regarded as a novelty, he does not recognise his own prejudice in his own linguistic choices to describe women. In this regard, Coplan's lack of awareness is in stark contrast with authors such as Richard Middleton and Christopher Ballantine. In his valuable critique of the restrictive roles of black women inhabited in the urban popular music culture of 1950s, Ballantine writes:

> [The Manhattan Brothers] clearly read a popular mood correctly and, not finding themselves out of sympathy with it, took a step that Matshikiza hailed as 'something truly slashing!'—'blues queen' Emily Kwenane thus became the first woman adopted by the Manhattan Brothers. But within a few months she was to be replaced by a woman whom the group was to dub their 'Nut-brown Baby', with 'the voice of a nightingale'. The recipient of these diminishing metaphors—infant and bird—was none other than young Miriam Makeba. (2012: 150-151)

Ballantine's phrase 'diminishing metaphors' is in direct contrast to Coplan's description of women as 'songbirds' and his use of the word 'jewel' in his description of Mazwai (ibid.: 347, 349).

[121] Christopher Ballantine acknowledges the importance of Coplan's work in its time (2012: 199), as does Veit Erlmann who describes Coplan's book as 'the most theoretically grounded critique of the older school of South African musicologists' which 'represented a timely and salutary departure, in methodology, theory, and content, from the narrow paradigms of tribe and tradition' in its exploration of urban black popular music (1991: 2).

Siya Makuzeni, mentioned above, takes exception to the prevalence of the term 'diva' in relation to vocalists. In our first interview in 2006, Makuzeni became heated about the prevalent use of the term 'diva' in the South African press and was vehemently opposed to being called 'diva' or presenting herself yet as a solo artist. She argued that 'diva' brands a young artist before she has had a chance to establish herself artistically and unfairly suggests that a woman is difficult to work with (Makuzeni Int. 1, 2006). In our second interview four years later, she was more comfortable with the idea of being the 'front person' for a band and resigned to the reality that a female singer is not in control of all the perceptions that exist about her. She mused: 'I don't think that a lot of people who are called divas run around thinking that they are' (Makuzeni Int. 2, 2010). She described to me the frustration of starting her career as a multi-instrumentalist, yet only a few years later she is regarded mostly as a singer. She describes her 'public persona' as distinctly different to her self-perception and attributes this to the way audiences perceive her as well as the manner in which she is written about in the press:

> People are much more interested to talk about a singer who is fronting a band than some woman who can play the trombone and sing and compose. That's not interesting! When she holds the mic[rophone], that's it. She looks great, and she sings well and that's pretty much what we'd like to get out of women. And a lot of women in the jazz field basically are typically that. (ibid.)

In Makuzeni's view, women are stereotypically assumed to be the vocalist in a band, which can be very limiting for a woman musician who fulfills other roles too. This is not only a male view, she asserts, for it is typical of audiences, male and female musical colleagues, promoters, and journalists—and many of these people are women. Thus it is part of the 'dumbing down' effect of easy acceptance of stereotypes in society that seems to irritate Makuzeni. Many women collude with stereotypes that belittle women's roles by behaving accordingly. Strong individuals—like Makuzeni— promote critical vision within social roles by challenging gender stereotyping.

Connie Bentlage used the term diva several times in the interview, saying both: 'I mean you don't have to be a female to be a diva' and '…when I say diva I mean somebody who is trying to outshine everybody else' (Int. 2006). She also uses the term for its negative connotation, and notably, used it to refer to both male and female singers. A tension between vocalists and instrumentalists was mirrored in my interview with vocalist Ziza Mhlongo. When asked about her opera training and early career, she joked: 'I already knew that I wasn't going to be an opera diva!' Reticent to engage with the term 'diva', she considered: '… one thing that has definitely threaded throughout my musical career and upbringing, is

that musicians really don't give a hoot for singers. They don't! Complete disrespect!' Later she commented: 'I don't want to be that woman. I'm *not* that woman: a diva … I want to be a musician!' (Mhlongo Int. 2010) It is the perceived vanity and self-absorption—the negative stereotype—of the opera diva that Mhlongo so strongly rejects. Yet when talking of her musical influences she cited Josipa Lisac, whom she describes as 'a famous Croatian singer' and 'a diva', here using the term in its positive description of a marvelous singer of esteem (ibid.). Similarly, Janine Neethling (2006) described Sibongile Khumalo as 'one of the absolute…one of our true divas in this country' and 'an incredible woman!'

So the term 'diva' is understood and used to denote both positive and negative traits and its usage by men can on occasions indicate a 'male gaze', whereas the women quoted above most often use it as a term describing performance, either positively or negatively. Its continued use in common speech and the printed word ties in to what Lucy Green has described as 'musical patriarchy' (1997:15) and her idea that 'singing affirms patriarchal definitions of femininity' (ibid.: 28). This idea is almost ironically expressed in Leslie Gourse's title of 'Diva' for her introduction to her book *Madame Jazz* (1995), since it focuses entirely on female jazz instrumentalists (not singers). The introduction's title springs from the name of the all-female big band called Diva. In this introduction, Gourse outlines several issues facing women jazz instrumentalists, including the difficulty in finding a good manager: '…rare is the woman horn player who has inspired a manager with a long career in managing male jazz instrumentalists to believe in her work and become involved in her destiny' (1995: 99). Female saxophonist Matana Roberts made a similar point when she said: 'The problem with the female jazz musician in the States is that they're not really marketed in a way so you'd know about them, and if they are, it's in a way that appeals to men' (Le Gendre 2008: 12).

Finally, let me return to my question above in relation to Percy Mabandu's article: what is an alternative term to 'diva'? Why should we continue to use a term to describe a female musician that has underlying negative associations? In the absence of an equivalent male term that both celebrates and denigrates, perhaps one solution is to at least consider its potential negative connotations before using it. Alternatively, we could abandon the use of the term 'diva' altogether. Gwen Ansell makes this point well:

> The music industry has always had trouble with talented women. They have been variously presented as inspiring mothers of the nation, untouchable, goddess-like divas (the label for the likes of Maria Callas before it got dumbed down) or sex symbols (just about any popular star, including the classical-

> crossover variety). What the industry seems incapable of doing is marketing them as, simply, musicians. (2010: n.p.)[122]

Ansell's comment is entirely valid in saying that journalists are to blame for much of the discomfort felt by musicians over representation of women musician's image: at fault here is the journalistic 'hype' which is motivated by financial gain and personal success in a highly competitive business, and often loses sight of a musician's own aspirations.

In relation to the theorists, Adorno, Engh and Middleton, mentioned early in this chapter, the comments above from the singers whom I interviewed show that women are limited by stereotypical concepts placed upon them by members of their audience and notably by journalists. In real life such labelling can be unfair, irritating, demeaning and only at best perhaps glib praise. Women musicians may even feel obliged to emulate such stereotypical thinking, as is discussed in the following section.

Strategies of self-representation

'I am conscious of people watching me on stage all the time' comments Bronwen Clacherty (Int. 2007). This was a sentiment expressed repeatedly in interviews. My discussion of gender stereotypes and embodiment proceeds now to explore various strategies women musicians adopt to contend with *knowing* they are viewed as sexualized bodies. This discussion of the modes of femininity that different women choose to adopt in performance is threefold. Firstly, I explore how contemporary female rock musicians strategically perform 'girlhood': by deliberately cultivating various 'girlish' identities in their music (referencing 'feminine' pop in moments), style ('little girl' outfits, sometimes provocatively donned by sexy women) and stage acts (innocent, girly portrayals which then explode into

[122] Gwen Ansell's arts journalism courses run in tandem with both the Joy of Jazz Festival (until 2011) and The Cape Town International Jazz Festival. Ansell introduces young journalists embarking on careers in South Africa (and often already working professionally) to the skills, protocols, ethics and specialist beats that the arts journalist needs knowledge of. She also encourages her journalism students to equip themselves with knowledge about the South African music industry and its current debates, if they are to participate meaningfully in it. In particular, Ansell introduces her students in the Lady Porcupine Arts Journalism Workshops (a project of the annual Standard Bank Joy of Jazz Festival) to issues facing women in music. In 2007, 2009 and 2010, Ansell invited me to give talks to the groups attending her Lady Porcupine course, with a question and answer session afterwards. I experienced first-hand how these young women were encouraged to engage with issues that arise for women musicians in jazz and popular music in South Africa, historically and currently, and debate them. The commonplace term 'diva' for South African singers was one such issue negotiated, and the majority of students expressed afterwards that while they had unthinkingly used the term themselves, they would think twice in future about employing the term.

contrastingly (and stereotypically) 'masculine' rock singing, strutting and aggression). This strategy of playing 'girlhood' while parodying it at the same time is a way of challenging the idea that rock is solely male territory, as well as deflecting the male gaze, ironically attracting it simultaneously (Wald 1998: 586; Monsoon 2008: 41, 84). Secondly, more stereotypical images of sexiness—women as sirens—on stage are then discussed with reference to women musicians' responses to their individual approaches to dress and image. Lastly, ideas about individualism and resisting conventional feminine stereotypes are discussed before focusing on particular issues that face female instrumentalists.

The performance of girlhood

Gayle Wald identifies 'the performance of girlhood' as a trend that has been steadily increasing in prominence within rock music cultures since the 1990s (1998: 586). 'Although by no means a homogeneous or universal enterprise' explains Wald, the enactment of girlhood constitutes 'a new cultural dominant within the musical practice of women in rock' (ibid.: 587-8). Wald's discussion stems from Gwen Stefani's stage persona as lead singer of neo-ska band No Doubt, whose 1996 hit 'I'm Just a Girl' earned the band 'commercial visibility' (a decade into their existence) and propelled Stefani to popularity.[123] Wald describes Stefani:

> Sporting her trademark bared midriff, retro-platinum hair, and conspicuously made-up face (which often includes an Indian *bindi* ornamenting her forehead), Stefani has established a reputation as a skillful and dynamic live performer who puts on energetic, no-holds-barred shows (she once danced so hard during a concert that she fractured a foot). Stefani's performance of 'I'm Just a Girl' … provides a memorable illustration. At first prostrating herself on the stage and repeating the phrase 'I'm Just a Girl' in an infantile, whimpering voice, she then abruptly shifted gears, jumping up, railing 'Fuck you, I'm a girl!' at the delighted audience (at least half of whom were young women), and exuberantly launching into the remainder of the song. (ibid.: 586)

Another American performer synonymous with this performance style is Courtney Love who, in the 1990s presented a 'kinderwhore' persona wearing smudged red lipstick and a torn, ill-fitting baby-doll dress (ibid.: 587). In England, the Brit-pop band Spice Girls updated 'the manufactured glitziness of the "girl groups" of the 1960s while promoting a playful, if equivocally feminist, notion of "girl power" (ibid.: 586).' As Wald points out, sexually-provocative performances of girlish femininity were given precedent by Madonna

[123] Gwen Stefani has released two successful solo albums subsequent to the publication of Wald's article in 1996, although No Doubt remain together, and retained a high-profile career as both 'global music and fashion icon' (to quote the bands website; see 'No Doubt' n.d.: n.p.).

in the 1980s. Another antecedent to this trend of 'girlhood' (to the moments where performers shout obscenities and 'exuberantly launch' themselves into performance as opposed to the 'infantile, whimpering' moments Wald describes above) was the 'the action-based, anti-establishment feminist upsurge of 1992', the Riot Grrrl movement (Evans 1994: 192). As Wald explains, the Riot Grrrls (in both the UK and the US) 'attempted to produce a representational space for female rock performers that is, in effect, off-limits to patriarchal authority' through their 'snarling defiance of punk's longstanding (although hardly monolithic) traditions of misogyny and homophobia, as well as racism and sexism within the corporate music industry' (Wald 1998: 594-5). The Riot Grrrl movement was an attempt to create what Wald describes as 'avenues of feminist agency within traditionally masculinist popular forms' (ibid.: 606).[124]

While referencing some of the fierceness of the Riot Grrrls in their use of a girl as a mode of cultural resistance (by mocking conventions of female sexuality in their performances), Stefani and Love have also successfully played at being sexy. There is a contradiction between these women's 'girly' performances, intended to mock stereotypes not only of girls but also of embodied women on stage, while at the same time they are sexy (and not only 'girlish') on stage. In Wald's view, this 'critical disarticulation' is ultimately problematic (ibid.: 608). She also describes the 'predictably depressing' global popularity of the Spice Girls who 'appropriated the spunky defiance associated with the English Riot Grrrls in a patently opportunistic fashion'.[125] Nonetheless, the enactment of 'girlhood' is one strategy women musicians have employed within rock music in their stage image and craft. As Wald concludes, youth music cultures continue to offer girls (and here she refers to audiences as much as performers) 'important sources of emotional sanctuary and vital outlets for the expression of rage and pleasure, frustration and hope' (ibid.).

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[124] Wald describes her own ambivalent theoretical venture into 'girl studies' (the cultural studies of girls) as informed not only by her reading of young women rock musicians' feminist appropriations of 'hegemonic girlhood, based on the related notion that youth music provides an important cultural venue for the articulation and rearticulation of youthful subjectivities', but also an increasing body of psychological literature of girlhood (Wald 1998: 607).

[125] Richard Middleton makes cutting critical comment on the 'fake individualism and collective empowerment' The Spice Girls espoused at the extreme end of Thatcherism (in Clayton, Herbert and Middleton 2003: 258). He points out that their 'proclamations of "girl power" focused on gender rather than class' and along with their lyrics and music epitomised a false 'simulacrum of difference': 'a wannabe [after the title of one of their hits] teleology, a fantasy in which nobody fails and nothing is left out: rock and pop, romance and raunch, black (rap) and white (singalong), past and future are seamlessly stitched together. But the stitching (the suturing, as Lacan would call it) is overdone: it could not last—as became evident, on the level of biography, with the Spice Girls' disintegration, and, on the level of society, with the passage from Thatcherite postfeminism to the pseudomeritocratic populism that followed, accompanied as this was by a wave of emollient girl and boy bands on the one hand, and an underground subchorus of unorthodox gender poses on the other' (ibid.).

The strategy of evoking girlhood with the satiric intention of countering the male gaze as described above was not articulated in such extreme terms in my interviews, and few women I interviewed specifically adopt this type of persona in their own original acts. However, many have enacted it in stage performances, either in 'cover-bands' or theatre shows, or have worked in such shows as instrumentalists alongside vocalists who were referencing this mode of femininity in performance (Artico Int. 2006; Bentlage 2006; del Mei Int. 2006; Goddard Int. 2006; Hiles Int. 2006; Lebabo Int. 2006; O'Hanlan Int. 2006; Ribeiro Int. 2006; Zlatkova Int. 2006; Birkholtz Int. 2010). Certainly it was a strategy of performance I witnessed on many occasions in watching performances during the course of this research, but it is one of which these women are conscious even if they do not entirely identify with it.

Certainly 'girlhood' acts are so often aimed at audience appeal usually in a rather brash manner, but it is significant that this persona is not used in original acts outside of rock. This could be interpreted to imply that creativity involves a more serious degree of personal integrity. However, I suggest that the reason lies in the strong association—in South African popular music performance at any rate—of image with genre. In *kwaito*, women are rauchy sirens, in Afro-pop they are glamorous, sophisticated sirens, and in jazz the same, but being older and perhaps less glamorous is no sin. There are always exceptions to these stereotypes, yet there is a long way to go in terms of challenging conventional ideas about what singers should look like.

Women as sirens

One alternative mode of femininity is to consciously adopt a stereotypically sexy image on stage; the sort typically associated with women in American hip-hop and R&B. I suggest that women's performances in original popular music in South Africa could be generalised within this context into two modes of femininity: the fiercely sexualised performances of women in *kwaito*, evident in the stage styles of women such as Lebo Mathosa and Thembi Seete (of Boom Shaka), and the rather more deliberately 'sophisticated', sultry performances of Afro-pop singers such as Simphiwe Dana and Lira. Angela Impey has argued that the 'overtly sexualized mode of self-representation' of female *kwaito* artists can in fact be read against the grain:

> In as much as it has become the fastest growing popular music and urban style of the '90s, *kwaito* has also been criticized for its whorish representations of women, and for its lack of moral integrity. I have suggested that while the sexual objectification of women in *kwaito* may be interpreted as evidence of an ongoing male hegemony in contemporary South African society, *kwaito* has also offered women a new kind of agency in self-representation in post-apartheid South Africa. As in Madonna's 'Bad Girl' antics in the '90s, the highly publicized/visualized assertions of their sexuality can be similarly interpreted as the articulation of a whole new set of liberatory [sic] images by women in *kwaito* a decade later. (2001:49)

None of the women I interviewed are *kwaito* artists, and would not necessarily read such sexualized performance on stage in this way. However, most women had opinions to offer about presenting a sexual image on stage. 'It's a persona you put on', Nkoto Malebye remarked (Int. 2006). The following comments by my interviewees about sexiness, image and their approach to both reveals several themes: women's responses to being seen as sexual objects on stage, their strategies with coping with this, and a somewhat distinct pragmatism that pervades choices about image, apparel and identity in performance.

Nkoto Malebye, for instance, spoke about the awkwardness she felt singing the song 'Oh Daddy, Squeeze Me' in *Ain't Misbehavin'*. She had to sing sexually-charged lyrics, centre stage, the spotlight illuminating her in 'that little blue number they put me in' (a tight, tiny dress she felt exposed in). Playing a 'helpless young thing' to an imagined 'Daddy' (in this song's context an older lover, not a father), she reminded herself she was playing a character in a musical, not herself, which helped her to suppress her embarrassment. She explained that she just tried to do her best and 'let the audience enjoy the song' (Int. 2007).

Laurie Levine supported Rodrigues in London, an important moment in her career, and described feeling uncomfortable at the audience reaction:

> [When I was] introduced on stage, there were whistles. I don't know how comfortable I was with that, because had I been a man, he wouldn't have had that. I don't feel 100% comfortable with that, but I am aware that you are putting yourself out there as ... an object of sexual admiration, because I think music is generally seen [in these terms]. It's hard to describe this. So that was quite weird and unexpected. So I almost hold my breath now, and think: 'please don't let anyone in the audience whistle'. It's just so embarrassing. (2006)

Experienced singer Celeste Ribeiro had a more seasoned reaction to whistling male audience members: 'But they do it to every woman on stage. She's all dolled up, looking her best and up there on stage, quite unattainable, and I think it's something different from their home. He's probably got a super-intelligent wife, but it's just different. Men like difference, variety in a way' (Int. 2006). There is an objectiveness to Ribeiro's statement, no doubt gained from her considerable experience as a vocalist. Having seen Ribeiro perform on stage, I interpret

that she is well used to her good looks, charisma and sexiness being commented on as much as the fact that she is a superb singer. Laurie Levine, in contrast, seems less confident:

> Image is the one thing that I do have to give some attention to. It's something I can work on, of matching up my image with the music, and that's quite difficult. Probably I might need a professional's help and get someone like a stylist to come in, but I haven't had to think about that as much. But I am very aware of it, and do think about it when I choose my clothes. There are so many different choices. That's just the image side. In terms of the performance side, I think as you get more comfortable on stage – and I still have a long way to go – but I think you discover what your persona is. You may not choose it consciously but it chooses you in a way. (Int. 2006)

Yet to set one woman musician's confidence and experience off against another's in this regard would be to make a superficial interpretation. In 2006, the year of these interviews, Levine may not have had the wealth of stage experience of Ribeiro to cope with the male gaze without a flicker of discomfort. Yet she was steadily making a name for herself, establishing herself as a solo artist in an arguably male-dominated genre while writing her own musical material and leading her own band.[126] In concert, she already came across as self-assured and comfortable on stage (even when she may not have felt that way). Ribeiro, in contrast, was not performing her own material on stage. Perhaps some of her ease in dealing with the male gaze came from performing exclusively in 'cover-band' shows and corporate functions and, consequently, assuming a certain lead-female-singer-role—one she wears like a costume and performs as an act but 'discards at the edge of the stage' when not performing (Steward in Cooper 1995: 57). This is of course speculative, yet I believe there is a complicated relationship between attitude to performance, sexual objectification and musical identity evident in the statements of both women.

That women—no matter how confident they may look on stage or how experienced and successful they are—can be deeply affected by audience reaction to their image is made clear by an experience that happened to Claire Johnston:

> There was one show we did in Australia; there was a group of radical lesbians—talk about *sexual harassment*—who basically pulled faces at me for the entire show … it turned out afterwards, they object to anyone wearing make-up: that was their issue. 'Get off … get off!' But it was dreadful … At the end of the show I broke down … This group of radical lesbians were in one little corner; the rest of the venue loved what we were doing, but you just need one person to dislike you, particularly when you are younger, and it's like a spear into your bloody soul. (Int. 2006)

Johnston's experience does not suggest that all female stage performers are vulnerable and self-conscious, but by being objectified as sexualized bodies on stage they may be rendered more vulnerable and self-conscious than they imagined when first setting out to make music.

[126] At the time of writing in 2012, Levine's career as a singer-songwriter has continued to gather momentum. She released her debut album *Unspoken* in 2007, a year after our interview, and two subsequent albums: *Living Room* (2009) and *Six Winters* (2011), both nominated for SAMA awards (*Six Winters* won the 'Best Producer' SAMA in 2012 for Dan Roberts).

Without exception, all women felt image was something they had to give attention to when performing. Young solo artist Ayanda Nhlangothi said:

> Well my approach is inspired by the creative energy that I have … I want there to be some identity in it, for what I wear to reflect me in it … It's just about being sure of who you are … You don't want to look a specific way and get stereotyped … it's an exciting challenge for me. What I wear on stage and on the album sleeve photos needs to interpret the music so that people expect something. (Int. 2006)

Unlike Nhlangothi, a substantial number of the women I interviewed work in different musical settings and genres all the time (effectively session musicians, rather than only as solo artists) and commented that the image they choose to present on stage is pragmatically chosen. The overriding concern for most interviewees was the idea of simply 'dressing appropriately for the gig'. The general consensus was that theatre work requires one to be sexier and more heavily made-up, whereas the corporate function scene requires women musicians to be 'sexy yet elegant' (Int. del Mei 2006). Cathy del Mei made a pragmatic point simply: 'I don't go out cheaply, and in my niche market that I've found at the moment, presentation counts for 70%' (ibid.).'

Violinist Elena Zlatkova commented that stage apparel is very important in the world of corporate functions and in musical theatre. 'You must know how the show works. Even the men put on makeup on stage… that's the way it is in the corporates: hair and makeup. You have to make an impression in ten minutes. If I wear black clothes, no one will notice me' (Int. 2006). She explained that 'the look is so important and I get jobs because I am female. They definitely prefer female violinists because of the visual aspect. I don't wear sexy over the border and will keep sophisticated. Sexy, yes, but within a framework. Not showing flesh, I don't like that' (ibid.). She also told me how she declined a contract in a theatre because it stipulated she would wear a very short mini-skirt. She felt this would have compromised her professionalism in other aspects of her work such as teaching and playing in orchestral setting, if a parent of a student or one of her classical music colleagues seen her present such a sexualised image on stage. She said: 'Really, that would have ruined that reputation for me' (ibid.).

Celeste Ribeiro also commented that while theatre shows can call for 'skimpy' apparel, 'corporate' gigs require a higher degree of elegance. She gave an interesting and practical reason for this: to avoid a 'negative response from corporate wives':

> You know what I did in clubs when I was younger? I'd win the girls over. You want the girls to be your friend, not to perceive you as competition. 'She's the girl on stage, and my boyfriend is looking at her and she could take him away from me or she could make a move on him.' Do you know what I mean? So I learnt from those days to get the girls on my side. And nowadays with corporates, it's older ladies, or more mature women – not 'chickies' in clubs anymore – and they're sitting with their husbands and they are not dressed the way you are dressed. They're smart but a little more demure and you're all glitzy and glamorous and if you start hanging all over their husbands…So I find I always pander to the women in the audience first. I actually make a mockery of the guys. I don't sit on their laps or do the sexy thing with them. I do the fun thing with them, and I get the girls to sing—encourage them to have a better vibe than the men, that sort of thing. So you try to get the girls on your side, but you're not a man killer, you're just there to do your job and have fun, not to 'work' anyone! I've even had corporate functions where I've been told: 'we've got wives with us, and please don't go and fondle the man in the corner's bald spot or pander to him in any way because the wives would prefer you to stay on stage.' They've had girls that will get on laps and they don't want that. It's a different protocol. But at the same time, you've got to look glamorous and glitzy. If you don't look glitzy enough they are not going to book you again. So it's a fine line. (Int. 2006)

Ribeiro believes there is great pressure on solo singers to remain 'glitzy and slim'. 'Also when you get booked as a solo artist, you have nothing to back you up. You have to be the package', she explained (ibid).

> A prime example was a gig I did in Port Elizabeth … I had sent my portfolio through, but the guy didn't know what I looked like, so when I walked into the room … he almost heaved a sigh of relief that I wasn't this big, ugly, fat, old woman. He knew I was in my thirties. He said: 'Ah! You look good!' And in fact he was inappropriately touchy the whole night long—you know that whole thing that goes on some times? It wasn't overt, too much where I had to tell him to stop, but there was a bit of a lecherous thing, and when he asked me how old I was and I told him, he said: 'oh, you're in good nick for your age then!' (ibid.)

Vocalist Wendy Twyford who runs and fronts corporate jazz band Atmosferic, explained her approach to dress on stage:

> I always feel that you present a certain image when you're up there, and I would like to look professional in my dress. Even in our Atmosferic little unit, we always look smart, but obviously then funky and creative. We'll never arrive in jeans and look sloppy. Our image is part of our whole package deal, so we like them to know that they are getting a sophisticated product with the music … Also when you're singing jazz, people have an expectation that you're going to look the part. I don't think I can ever remember seeing a jazz singer, a lady, come across as a sloth, whereas men can get away with it because it's the whole 'jazz' thing. (Int. 2006)

As if in dialogue with Twyford, Bronwen Lubbe comments:

> I just think it's dreadful that women would be expected to wear certain things. You're either a sexy dresser or you're not … I think it's important that a woman looks beautiful and that she feels beautiful. That's the most important thing to me. And if a guy says wow you played well, but you should dress more sexily, then he's not there for the music. (Int. 2005)

Lubbe articulates an idealism that few other women interviewed relayed. The reason, I suggest, is that unlike any other women I spoke to, she works in the genre of gospel (as pianist, vocalist and musical director of a worship team). The issue of sexiness on stage is not of much concern in her own performance style, even though she is aware it is for other women in music. Yet she makes a revealing statement: audiences are not just 'there for the

music'. As so many of the women who find work in the Johannesburg musical theatre and corporate function scene related, audiences (and clients) do not simply listen, they look too. 'There are different expectations of the girl musicians', explained Kerry Hiles, 'You're not just a chick in a band. You are actually a statement, I think, a selling point' (Int. 2007). I suggest that a large proportion of the women interviewed capitalise very much on Hiles' idea that image and sexiness 'sells'—to which I return shortly. Women act as sirens to earn a living and meet audience hunger—but would most find it distasteful at least to *be* a siren?

Individualism: humour and quirkiness

Another strategy adopted in performance is to play on humour or quirkiness in performances, rather than on sexuality, which often results in a very individual mode of performance. For instance, in 2006 Abbey Artico sported platinum blonde, spiky, short hair and her stage performances were about fun and showmanship. She energetically paced the stage, often with a quirky, marching strut as she played a saxophone solo, and she invariably evoked an enthusiastic audience response. 'Ok you need the glitterati, great, because it just makes you look better, but I think you should have the essence of *you* when you wear something. Like if you wouldn't ever wear a miniskirt in normal life, then I wouldn't put you in one on stage. There needs to be a feel of you, do you know what I mean (Int. 2006)?'

Other women were less obviously quirky or individualistic in their own performance style, yet they certainly spoke about other women performers who dare to be different. For instance, Wendy Twyford described the joy of seeing Siya Makuzeni play trombone, something she views as unusual for a woman: 'she's a tiny framed woman, but when you hear her! She has purple blood in her veins – she's like a princess! No, a queen! When she plays her trombone, she's just magnificent (Int. 2006)!'

Icelandic singer and composer Björk is known not only for her very individual singing style but also for her unusual fashion style and, while not South African, is a musician several women cited. In the 1990s her witty trademark hair-knots and vintage clothes style were popular. She has, however, also had to contend with being described as pixie-like, elfin-like

and other such terms, which reference her tiny frame and individuality (otherness), all of which annoys her deeply (Evans 1994: 79).

> More than anything though, Björk is angry about the lack of freedom for women to develop as characters rather than physically desirable beings. While men are judged in terms of their intellect, imagination and wit, women tend to be looked at as little more than bodies, particularly when they're involved in entertainment. Björk has clung fiercely to her own convictions, irrespective of conservative standards, using the opportunities afforded to her by the likes of Italian *Vogue* to play with ideas of female imagery, and has proved that women do not need to cramp their style in order to be successful. (ibid.)

Björk describes never having given credence to issues of difference between men and women before she went solo, yet recognised as she took creative control of her career as a solo artist that issues did arise: 'What really pisses me off is not being dealt with by people on an equal level' (ibid.: 90). On the idea of being quirky, she makes an important statement:

> Women are just not allowed to be characters. A man is allowed to be scruffy or a hunk, or a Woody Allen or an Albert Einstein, and still be accepted 100 per cent man. But if a woman hasn't got a certain figure or doesn't make an effort to remain on a level which is considered feminine, she isn't in the game. If you had a woman who was the equivalent of Woody Allen, charming brilliant and with her own personality, she'd be nowhere. That pisses me off more than being dismissed as an Eskimo or whatever, because if I had to pick between the hunk and Woody Allen, I'd say I was more in the Woody Allen category! (ibid.)

Björk ascribes belittling and exoticising comments on her looks as not just sexist, but as stemming from British cultural imperialism. While her gender is only part of the issue described here, I quote Björk at length because she makes a revealing statement about the entanglement of identity and stereotypes:

> In Iceland we'd [The Sugarcubes] stuck together through thick and thin as a gang of people for eight years and had quite a colourful past, and then some bigheaded journalist from *Melody Maker* decided that we were his pet of the month. The arrogance of the British press, that kind of 'We discovered you so shut up and behave', just didn't go down very well with us because we had a past in a country which they thought was full of Eskimos and polar bears. I mean, there's not one polar bear or Eskimo in Iceland! They were so full of ignorance. They weren't really interested in trying to find out anything about us. They thought we were ethereal puffin eaters even though we would say very down-to-earth, solid things. All this 'Elfin woman, Pixie woman' stuff I get now is some kind of leftover from that. Before they decided beforehand, with this imperialistic view of theirs, that we were some sort of exotic property from another galaxy. And they couldn't deal with the fact that we were six different individuals who ran our own record company and radio station in Iceland, who managed ourselves all the way through, and who put out a magazine. (ibid.: 87)

Björk's scornful critique of British journalists is significant here. However her personal confidence and humour is rare. Siya Makuzeni (Int. 1, 2006) and Bronwen Clacherty (Int. 2007) are also petite, and openly expressed their irritation at other people's comments on their bodies. Although small of frame, Siya Makuzeni has an extraordinarily powerful voice with an unusually broad range. In tandem with her daring and prowess in improvisation, this prompts people to often make comments such as 'the best things come in small packages' to her (Int. 1, 2006). She acknowledges these comments are invariably well-meant and that her

musical strength of presence is often being admired, yet she finds the repeated references to her size and youth tedious and, ultimately, belittling (ibid.). She explained that her small body is often commented on to in relation to her trombone playing, an experience mirrored by trumpeter Kgaogelo Mailula: 'Oh you know, always this comment on my small body!' (Int. 2, 2012) Bronwen Clacherty articulated similar frustration:

> I've had to come to terms with the fact that I am a small person, and often I interpreted things people said like: 'you're thin'—well no one wants their body commented on; people think it's rude to say you're fat, but it's not rude to say you're so thin! I've never struggled with food, but I've always been conscious of the fact that I am smaller—and having a smaller body and people *commenting* on it made me *feel* like a smaller person. My body is small, but my personality can be big. Now I don't even think of my body as small, when people say: 'Oh, you're so tiny', I have to think about it a bit! Oh, I am, but what does that mean? I can still play drums; I can still do it. (Int. 2007)

Returning to the idea of individualism and not conforming to typical feminine stereotypes that Björk raised, Clacherty specifically cited performers who adopt stage personas that are out of the norm as influential:

> I also look up to women musicians who are a little bit different. For instance, how Hildegunn [Øiseth, a Norwegian trumpeter] is on stage. I mean it was weird—the whole thing she did with acting like a robot on stage [in performance at the Standard Bank National Jazz Festival in Grahamstown in July 2007]—that was very weird! But it was beautiful, and something different. She was crazy, and she has a really lovely sense of humour … her quirkiness came out … she's not like everybody else … And also Björk—she is somebody who is just weird, and I really admire her for just being like that! … she's another being, she's not even human anymore! (ibid.)

Clacherty's last statement about Björk, in my interpretation, reveals a delight in the possibility of viewing women musicians as divorced from their gender, femininity or sexuality. This could be read as tapping into the Elphin metaphor Björk objects to, but it seems unlikely. Instead, Clacherty is identifying something in Björk's performances more akin to Haraway's cyborg: not technological, but an identity/entity/creative being free of the restrictions and limitations of gender (Haraway 2000: 384). This stems from neither an appreciation of deviousness or desire to be deviant herself, but is a release from the pressure to adopt traditional modes of femininity on stage and in her music-making.

Clacherty's musical identity rests strongly in the creativity of the sounds she creates and the process of making music. Although a beautiful young woman, she is not interested in attracting attention on account of her looks. Rather she wishes her music to be the point of reception for others. As a female percussionist, Clacherty has few other points of reference for seeing other women in her profession. 'I want to be me' she explains:

> I don't want to be hard. I don't want to be better than all the men, but I do want to be as good as all the men. I want to have my own thing, and …I think I can be unique. Playing vibraphone and congas, I'm the only woman doing that, and I'm very lucky to have that … maybe there's a comfort in being different: you don't have to compete with other people because you're different … Maybe it's not always such an easy thing, but there is an insight into humanity here (ibid.).

Women instrumentalists

I now focus only on female instrumentalists, for whom issues of embodiment can be more extreme than for vocalists. Some instrumentalists I interviewed suggested that their choices regarding their dress and image on stage are affected by different issues, such as practical concerns about playing an instrument or stereotypes about how they looked while playing. Saxophonist Vicky Goddard described feeling limited to playing in trousers when she was younger because she plays an instrument conventionally perceived as 'masculine', but commented that she increasingly enjoys performing in a ball gown for corporate functions: 'Many people have said how amazing it looks and I don't feel uncomfortable in the least!' She did, however, say that in her Barnyard Theatre performances she has preferred to wear trousers rather than skirts because she is aware of the emphasis on sex appeal in that setting (Int. 2006). In contrast, percussionist Bronwen Clacherty prefers to remain pragmatic about her stage clothing so that she can focus on her musicianship: 'I have to wear pants on stage; I can't wear dresses or skirts, because when I'm playing the drums, I can't hike up my skirt and put my legs around a drum! … If I feel comfortable, and if I feel that I look good, then it's one more thing that I don't have to think about' (Int. 2006).

Pianist Melody van der Merwe feels instrumentalists and singers are affected differently:

> I feel that if I arrive in black pants and a black jacket – like the guys – it's perfectly acceptable. I don't have to wear a pretty dress, and I'm not always that comfortable wearing a dress because I've got to sit like this, and my foot taps, and I've got to pedal. But then sometimes I think: oh don't be stupid, be feminine! What's wrong with doing that and being a pianist? Why are pianists more…why do I get the male feeling about it? (Int. 2006)

Even though women have historically been more accepted in jazz as pianists, Melody perceives a gender issue at play for jazz instrumentalists:

> I thought maybe it's better for jazz pianists to look more male or neutral. It's the whole image, and I'm very aware that it's because of society's view and how we're influenced. That's all. From the 50s, if you saw a piano trio with bass and drums, they were male. The singer might have been female, but that's it. So you're growing up with that in your mind. And now it's fine, you decide to do it, but you get confused. (ibid.)

I suggest that the reason for this 'confusion' is twofold: the paucity of female role models for young female instrumentalists to take inspiration from, and the unfortunate dominance of gender-based stereotypes about which instruments women should and should not play. At the extreme end of these stereotypes lies not only perceived limitations about women's musical capabilities, but also projected sexual fantasies.

Mowday, at the Grahamstown Festival in 2007, gave a remarkable performance on stage, moving athletically as she played extremely demanding music on her saxophones:

> And it was strange: I had an interesting crit. and it bothered me a lot … saying that I have so much style, and so little playing, but I know this: I got four European festivals out of that gig, so I think I can trust their judgment a bit more than some music critic who can't play jazz. *But* what it did was that I wondered if that guy wouldn't have made those comments if I hadn't been playing in a short red dress, or if I hadn't been a woman? The kind of comments were just stupid: it lacked complete substance; meanwhile I'm winning awards, I've just got my permanent residence in Australia because my writing is so good, and here is this person saying these things. He would never have said these things about a man. (Int. 2007)

The danger, then, for a woman like Mowday who dares to parody or preempt the objectifying gaze by having fun with images of normative femininity, is risking her audience not realising her intention. This is all the more frustrating for her if her legitimacy as an artist is questioned in the process.

> I've always thought that my battle here was *here*, but it's all over the world! Women musicians—no matter how big they are—have the same problems. I book a band … because I'm not going to have this person letching after me, because it happens. You *are* the only female. And for a while, for a long time, I've thought I'd rather play behind a curtain, because people don't take me seriously because I'm a girl. If they didn't know I was a girl? People don't know I'm a woman if they *hear* me play! I was sick and tired of that whole imagery, and I wanted to be taken seriously, and then a strange thing happened … I had to go: 'right, I do things differently' because you *do* do things differently. I'm also trying to find role models, you're trying to find people that you can relate to, and then I'm not finding them, so you've got to kind of create them yourself! … And it made me think I am different, and this is the cost of it, but this is the confidence I've gained from fellow female musicians: the fact that there's something to be gained from other fellow human beings and musicians; that we are different, and that's actually cool. The minute you stop trying to prove yourself, then you're actually on the right road. (ibid.)

Mowday's comments show how her unusual performance appearance and playing lead to an annoying critique from a male journalist who failed to realize her intentions as a musician in his stereotyped judgements. Additionally, her experience in Europe enables her to see how ingrained masculine sexualized denigration is world-wide which leads her the confident, brave final statements about difference and confidence quoted above.

Embodiment: male desire and aberrant female images

'Chick does fine blow jobs on the trumpet' (Motaung 2001: n.p.). This was the headline of a *City Press* article written by a woman journalist, Sonia Motaung, the ultimate male fantasy that could be imagined about women horn players, in bold print, just above Motaung's name and her column title: 'Woman to woman' (ibid.). When I showed Kgaogelo Mailula this article about her in 2012, she had long since forgotten about it. She gasped, and covered her mouth with her hands. Her husband, Magalane Phoshoko, shook his head sympathetically

and grunted. Both remembered the interview with Motaung, but had not seen it in print (Mailula Int. 2, 2012).

Making the visual image of a female trumpeter a sexual act of course reveals more about the deviance of the headline's author, than it does about Mailula. The deviance is projected on to the female trumpeter: she is performing an unspeakable act in public by stepping into an image associated as the sole domain of men, hence her abnormal assumption of a male role becomes a metaphor for aberrant behaviour. The freakishness projected on to Kgaogelo Mailula in a public platform reveals a stereotype about female horn players that Allen articulated about the 1950s,[128] a view obviously not yet eradicated (the emphasis is mine, not Allen's):

> That women were able to establish a space for themselves in the previously male realm of professional, public vocal performance, suggests that a desire on the part of men to preserve professional spaces exclusively for themselves does not account for the resistance experienced by aspirant women instrumentalists. The nature of this resistance lies, I suggest, in their challenge to the notion of women as bodies. Vocalists were accepted not because they did not challenge men, but because they did not contest the definition of female. A voice remains part of the body; it is (generally) still recognisably gendered, even when disembodied on a recording. *The attempt of women to move outside the body and express music on instruments brings extreme attention back to their bodies. Unlike their vocal colleagues, however—whose embodiment ... is often flattering, even professionally advantageous—the bodies of women instrumentalists are treated as aberrant. They are neither male nor female, therefore shocking and unacceptable.* (2000: 160)

A similar projection of perceived sexual deviance projected on to female instrumentalists is that of being queer. Lynette Leeuw described to Lara Allen how her saxophone playing in the 1950s elicited the suspicion that she was abnormal. 'People thought, "I'm not a lady, there's something wrong with me" ', she explains (Allen 2000: 159). One male saxophonist, for instance, called her a *drassie*.[129] Leeuw described to Allen the implications of this insult:

> A drassie is a woman who does not bear children and who does not fall in love … this man said no, he thought I was that because I was playing a saxophone – an instrument that is not played by a woman. And that's when I had two children already! He did not know me but he just said that. You know, people think anything. (Leeuw in Allen 2000:159)

Other instrumentalists suffered from similar prejudices:

> Margaret Buyana, for instance, was incorrectly rumoured to be lesbian, a label still applied to women instrumentalists in the nineties (Leeuw, Int.; Lebabo, Int.; Albert Ralulimi pers. Com.). Although most press articles about women instrumentalists overtly or covertly undermined their claim to good musicianship, there were exceptions. A *Drum* article about drummer Maggie Masemola is unusual in that it applauds, almost revels in, the challenge she offered to male musicians. It clearly states that she

[128] Allen explains: 'During the 1950s, recognition of women instrumentalists as serious musicians was undermined by their representation as the protégés of men; as novelties, gimmicks or freaks; as being sexually abnormal and therefore not real women; or as the objects of male sexual desire. This set of representational strategies and the experiences of women instrumentalists illustrate the limits of the extent to which established gender roles could be challenged in the music industry during the 1950s' (2000: 160).
[129] A derogatory term meaning lesbian.

> is not the protégé of a man and that her achievement is soley due to her dedication, determination and natural talent; the way in which her musicianship overcame the disadvantages of being a woman is celebrated (*D* 9.57). However, Maggie's career did not develop; there is no mention of her in the press after this story and she is not remembered by other musicians. As Lynette discovered when she broke prescribed gender roles to play saxophone after her marketing value as a gimmick had worn off, tolerance of women instrumentalists did not extend beyond certain boundaries. When she started to seriously challenge the male domain by becoming a professional saxophonist she met with opposition from male colleagues that ranged from lack of co-operation to sexual harassment (Leeuw, Int.). (Allen 2000: 159-160)

Similarly, Lipalesa Lebabo has often been assumed to be queer: 'It's just an association with the instrument … It used to bother me when most of the people used to think I was a lesbian, you know, when they saw me playing the bass [but] I'm not doing it for them, I'm doing it for myself' (Int. 2006). The reactions that Lebabo and Mailula evoke suggest that contemporary women instrumentalists sometimes still come up against stereotypes of embodiment in very negative ways, and experience 'the boundary between being treated as a novelty and a freak as highly permeable,' just as Lynette Leeuw did sixty years ago (Allen 2000: 159).

Few of my respondents verbalised experiences of being regarded as sexually loose or deviant, (although many described experiences of being viewed as a sex object). Yet several horn players I interviewed did describe such unpleasant incidents of being the brunt of vulgar comments. Cathy del Mei once received a call to inquire whether she would play naked for a man's fiftieth birthday party (the request incredulously coming from his wife!). She gave a 'quick, polite no' (Int. 2006). Saxophonist, Vicky Goddard related incidents of being the brunt of sometimes excessively vulgar comments. She explained: 'They are quite impressed that you're a musician, in some respect, but they see you as easy' (Int. 2006). She spoke openly of commonplace crude comments said to her after theatre performances, including the several times conjured blowjob metaphor. She dealt with the unpleasant topic mostly with humour not anger, but did reflect: 'I get that all the time, it's not nice' (ibid.).

This particularly disgusting image related in variously inappropriate comments by male audience members to Goddard and other female horn players (Mowday 2006; Makuzeni 2010; Mailula 2012) suggests that there do exist some alarmingly misogynistic and belittling impressions of female instrumentalists. Would men relay such sexual fantasy—sexual symbolism not even veiled—to a woman were she *not* a performer? There is an awkward disconnection between having an inappropriate thought about stage performer, and relaying it to the actual woman afterwards, off stage.

Evident in the discussion above are some extreme reactions of men to female instrumentalists: they are seen alternatively as freaks, aberrant, sexually devious and objects of male desire. The other two, perhaps more common responses to women playing instruments are, firstly, disbelief, and secondly, viewing them as novelties. Disbelief that they actually play instruments was a surprisingly common response the women instrumentalists interviewed spoke of. Vicky Goddard said: 'generally, people think you're miming' (Int. 2006). Incredulously, she even once had a man say to her after a performance: 'I didn't think women were clever enough to play the sax.' Goddard expressed frustration at these responses: 'I want to be seen as a musician not as a bit of eye candy for the men.' However, she also said 'It's probably a bonus that you look good in a dress, but you can play!' acknowledging that being a woman has its advantages (Goddard Int. 2006). Ndithini Mbali echoed the same experience, and explained that some people who have heard her album wish to see her perform live before they believe she is actually the saxophonist recorded. 'Some just don't believe that it's you, you know, because it's a man's thing. They always say it's a man's thing!' (Mbali Int. 2006) Similarly, Kgaogelo Mailula told a story of a male audience member who ran up on to stage and stood right next to her while she was performing live at a festival. He even put her hands on her chest, apparently to ascertain whether she was miming or not. He shouted 'She's really playing' enthusiastically to the crowd after she had blown into his ear (out of sheer frustration to get rid of him) (Int. 2, 2012).

In a more positive vein, Cathy del Mei commented that although she is often told that she has made people question their preconception that the saxophone is normally played by a man, she has not been insulted. She receives the comment 'you sound like a man' as a compliment (Int. 2006).

Women instrumentalists as novelties: advantages and disadvantages

Probably the most prevalent response to women instrumentalists I identified in my interviews was their being viewed as novelties. This is a situation paralleled in the history of popular music and particularly jazz in South Africa and elsewhere (Dahl 1984: 47; Bayton in Bennett et al 1993: 181; O'Brien in Cooper 1996; Tucker 2000: 3; MacKay 2005: 287).

Allen asserts that 'the space women forged for themselves as professional musicians during the 1950s remained almost exclusively within the vocal arena' (Allen 2000: 155). Being regarded as novelties had both positive and negative connotations for women instrumentalists. Allen explains:

> Initially they received more publicity than their male counterparts, but press coverage tended to focus on their gender, rather than their artistic or professional competence. As was the case for women singers, considerable attention was paid to their appearance and sexuality, which diverted attention from, and acknowledgement of, their artistic ability. Eileen Coxton's proficiency as a pianist, for instance, is somewhat obscured behind comments on her appearance: described as 'shapely' and 'a luscious pin-up beauty', she was reported to have 'been busy keeping herself in trim to start rehearsals' (*BW* 30.1.54' *BW* 27.11.54; *W* 5.1.57). *Post* described saxophonist Lynette Leeuw as 'comely' and her second alto, Patricia Nkomo, as 'dark and dreamy; (*P* 18.8.63); while *Ilanga* ended a report about Maggie Masemola with the comment, 'I am afraid the women will soon be causing keen competition in instrumental music. But the dice will be loaded against the men, as I see it, for the fair sex have more chances to pull through with their good looks. (*ILN* 21.4.56). (2000: 156-157)

She also documents how some women instrumentalists and/or their producers attempted to turn emphasis on sexuality to their advantage:

> Margaret Buyana, for instance, made a number of recordings incorporating the words 'sexy sax' into the titles that were issued with marketing material showing her playing the saxophone in a swimming costume (Leeuw, Int.); and a trio of women saxophonists established in Port Elizabeth during the mid-1950s were called the Sex and Sax Sisters (*Z* 7.55; *ILN* 24.3.56). (Allen 2000: 156-157)

My research in contemporary South Africa suggests the persistence of this phenomenon. Evident in the interviews I conducted were the reactions split between firstly, frustration and resistance and a striving to be accepted on merit without gender-bias; secondly, finding solace, safety and camaraderie in all-women musical bands; and thirdly, embracing the idea of novelty and using its commercial appeal both to carve out a space for women on stage and to make money doing so.

Ndithini Mbali said it succinctly: 'Hey, we struggle a lot! Especially we women artists … especially in the jazz category' (Int. 2006). Shannon Mowday explains:

> *As* a woman, it *is* a hard career. It's a hard career, full stop. And I thought about it a lot: do I have the gumption? You know my personality is why I've survived in this industry; it's why I'm playing with the best: because I *don't* sell on being a woman. But it's taken me a long time to embrace that I am a woman and that my perception is different. You know half the time as a woman performer, you think: 'I've got to prove myself all the time.' No matter how good all the women performers I've seen are, there's some element of: 'I've got to prove myself' [evident]. Men don't [think like this], they just play! ... you almost have to play doubly as good as a guy … and the amount of offers I've had to put me in fishnet stocking on stage, or lying on my back—'We'll give you record deals' … I run away! (Int. 2007)

Kerry Hiles reiterated this point: 'Female musicians have to be twice as good to be considered half as good. We have to be twice as good to be taken seriously by our male counterparts, I think. And although we've got a thing on our side that there is the novelty

factor, and we look good and we're pretty, and can sing high harmonies in the band … that's the reality of it' (Int. 2007). To Hiles, the 'novelty factor' is 'a double-edged sword … I get gigs because I am a girl, and I don't get gigs because I am a girl. I get gigs as a girl because of the novelty factor, and I don't get gigs as a bass player because the people hiring me don't think I'm capable … This is to do with playing an instrument. It doesn't affect singers' (ibid.).

Mowday in particular spoke of a tension between wanting to be a role model to other young women—'the mere fact that I'm doing what I'm doing, means that I'm showing people what is possible'—while also preferring to work only with musicians who are of an excellent standard. 'I don't mind playing with women who play really well' but 'I'm not finding them at home' (Int. 2007). She has worked in several all-women bands internationally,[130] and enjoys doing this because of the positive statement it makes about women being capable of playing jazz. 'There's a different vibe: girls are more nurturing, so when you're playing with girls in a band there's a different sensitivity, there's a different kind of response to the music.' The paucity of excellent women jazz instrumentalists in South Africa, she suggests, comes from the wrong emphasis in jazz education on 'fast, furious, technical stuff. Sometimes I think women don't want to be part of that, because it's not how we function. We're not good at bragging' (ibid.).

All women-bands: jazz bands, corporate entertainment and theatre shows

Her statements about all-women bands raise a question about the quality of all-women bands in South Africa. In the jazz scene in Gauteng alone, there are two all-female bands: Ladies In Jazz and Basadi.[131] While I did not interview any of these band members, I base my next statement on the comments made by other women I interviewed who know them (Lebabo 2006; Makuzeni Int. 1, 2006; Mbali Int. 2006; Mailula Int. 2, 2012), the statements made by David Coplan discussed earlier in this Chapter and the fact that Ladies in Jazz called their debut album *Challenges* (2004). I suggest that carving out a career in jazz is perceived to be

[130] At the time of interviewing Mowday in 2007 she was collaborating with Swedish trombonist Karin Hammer and Norwegian trumpeter Hildegunn Øiseth, and in South Africa they performed at both the 2007 Cape Town International and Standard Bank National Jazz Festivals.
[131] Basadi is the Sotho word for Women.

difficult for women and an all-women band may hold the appeal of being free of patriarchal attitudes. Drummer Anikki Maswanganye of Ladies in Jazz[132] explained:

> For years men have dominated the music industry and there have never been great opportunities for women musicians to explore their creativity. As part of self-empowerment, affirmative action and gender equality, it dawned on us women that the onus is on us to become more involved in the music industry and prove we can do things for ourselves. (Feldman 2004: n.p.)

This statement resonates with Linda Dahl's explanation in the context of American jazz: 'the formation of all-woman bands and orchestras by both black and white players during the early years of jazz must be understood in part as a response to the difficulties of gaining access to the more established—that is male—musical groups' (Dahl 1984: 47). Kristel Birkholtz, who—unlike many other violinists working in the popular music scene—is an experienced improviser, commented:

> You raise an interesting question I haven't thought of for a while … I find myself in the contemporary scene more, because I find the jazz scene very male dominated here, in Joburg at least. It's not that they are male dominated and exclusive, it's that they are an old-boy's club. I have been to one or two jams with jazz players and it was very much a guy thing. The actual environment is very male. It's difficult to go in there as a girl and make your way. (Int. 2010)

The evidence for my statement that women instrumentalists are predominantly viewed as novelties in popular music and jazz is the prevalence of all-women bands —a phenomenon I must point out that I did *not* expect to discover to the extent I did when beginning this research. In the jazz scene, there are the two all-women bands already mentioned. They are not high-profile as they do not perform live around town at public venues regularly (but this might be symptomatic of the current paucity of live music venues for jazz in Johannesburg). Yet both bands have been in existence for over ten years and do find work, appearing at occasional corporate functions, government functions, and since Basadi Women of Jazz is listed on various entertainment agencies websites. Both bands have featured on the bill at the Standard Bank Joy of Jazz and Arts Alive Festivals respectively in Johannesburg. Ladies in Jazz is annually involved with the 16 Days of Activism Against Women and Child Abuse campaign (Nhlapo 2009: n.p.). Basadi Women of Jazz has performed several times on television on the *Felicia Show* on ETV, *Africa Desk* on SABC 2, *Morning Live*, *Motswako* and *Afro Café* ('Basadi Women of Jazz' n.d.: n.p.), and both bands have performed internationally (Nhlapo 2009: n.p.).

[132] Ladies in Jazz was formerly known as The Art Ensemble Women of Jazz (Feldman 2004: n.p.), and was formed in 1998 by Anikki Maswanganganye (drums) and Thandi Mahlangu (lead vocals and percussion) (Nhlapo 2009: n.p.).

In the popular music scene there are more all-women musical groups, and it is apparent that there is a niche market for such groups to sustain a living by performing at corporate functions (Birkholtz Int. 2010). Here the emphasis is on a sexualised image, glamour and novelty appeal: women playing violins and saxophones predominate. Birkholtz explains:

> When you are working with corporates they are very image-focussed; they are buying a product. … You need to look the part, not just be the part … The all-girl group is a novelty, and you sometimes compromise quality…I've experienced it from both sides: I've also done Women's Day concerts, which I think give a very positive message. (Int. 2010)

Most of these groups are Johannesburg based, but they are also working all around the country. Perhaps the most high-profiled group is Cape-Town based Sterling EQ (Electric Quartet) whose members include a pop flautist, two electric violinists and electric cellist. Signed to EMI and having achieved several SAMA nominations and one award for their three albums (one of which is in my opinion strategically aimed at the lucrative Afrikaans market), they are billed on their website as South Africa's 'all-woman supergroup'. Gaining ground on Sterling EQ is Johannesburg-based electric string quartet The Muses, particularly since the release of their debut album in 2012. Promotional material for this album which showed the quartet performing live in sexy apparel, lasers attached to their bows, was aired repeatedly on prime-time SABC television throughout the November/December Christmas season in 2012, obviously aiming to create publicity to secure their place in the competitive function scene.

The Five Seasons Live Entertainment Agency website lists other Johannesburg-based established all-women instrumental groups who play the function scene include: Chix with Stix (a drumming trio posed in skin-tight leather outfits and high-heeled boots in their profile photograph); Intrique (a violin-saxophone duo of 'two charming ladies'); Fever Trio ('whose musical outfit is tailor-made for the Corporate entertainment market') and Candy Duo ('a classy singer' and 'sassy saxophonist' posed lying down in glamorous evening dresses) ('Five Seasons…' n.d.: n.p.). Many women also form one-off groups to suit offers of work at functions, and often perform solo at such functions. The general formula is elegantly and glamorously dressed young women playing to backing-tracks at corporate functions and other events such as parties and weddings. These are not the 'all-girl' groups of old that Sherrie Tucker refers to, but very definitely all-*woman* groups, whose appeal is their femininity, novelty and who obviously sustain their livelihoods with slick, professional live performances.

At the time of our interview, saxophonist Abbey Artico had just formed an all-women band called 'She' aimed at the corporate function scene. Her response was interesting when I asked her why she chose this name for the band. Abbey explained that she loves performing for audience, but her enjoyment of musical theatre work was diminishing:

> My passion had gone … then one night … I jumped up and said: 'I've got it! I'm going to start a band called She and I thought: 'that's brilliant!' The name came to me first. I saw a movie called *She* about some 'goddess type woman' stuck on an island somewhere with her male slaves around her and I remember a picture of her burning in flames at the end of the movie. It really stuck with me! (Int. 2006)

Many of the women performing in these function gigs also perform in 'cover-shows' (particularly in the Barnyard Theatre country-wide chain). In this area of live performance in the Johannesburg scene, I was surprised to find that a wealth of all-women shows have been mounted on Johannesburg theatre stages over the past fifteen years.[133] This demonstrates not only that their novelty appeals to audiences (even if only for a time), but also probably popularised all-women shows that have since moved into the corporate functions scene. It is, after all, the same women vocalists and instrumentalists who perform across both scenes and bring their experience from one musical situation to another. Several women interviewed performed in Richard Loring's production of *Girl Talk* at the Soundstage in Midrand, and its sequels, which featured an all-women cast of vocalists and instrumentalists in the backing band (Artico Int. 2006; Bentlage Int. 2006; del Mei Int. 2006; Hiles Int. 2006; Lebabo Int 2006; Riberiro Int. 2006). The name 'Girl Talk' quite clearly references the 'girl power' of the Spice Girls popular at that time and the performance mode of enacting 'girlhood' on rock and pop stages discussed earlier in this chapter. Connie Bentlage was the musical director for several *Girl Talk* productions and described the difficulty of finding female musicians to form the band: 'It was almost impossible!' The drummer in fact was a dancer who was learning drums as a hobby, and Bentlage described how Loring 'of course fell in love with the look' and 'assisted with lessons'. She auditioned 150 vocalists, and chose four 'fantastic' young women, yet the instrumentalists she described as 'completely green': 'some of them didn't even know their instruments' (Int. 2006).

These instrumentalists' talents were developed though their involvement in this production, however, and have gone on to sustain careers. One of the lead singers in the original Girl Talk production, Celeste Ribeiro summed up the Girl Talk productions as having put 'young

[133] Such productions include, for example, *G-String* (2003-6) and *Natural Woman* (2008) performed in the Barnyard Theatres nationwide, and Richard Loring's various productions of Girl Talk (2002-8).

and sexy' on stage' (Int. 2006). She commented, as did Connie Bentlage and Abbey Artico, that these productions allowed young girls to see female instrumentalists performing, and provided inspiration for a new generation of girls to start playing instruments:

> Clout[134] provided the first female musicians. Then you didn't see many for a while, and then shows like Girl Talk. And I think young girls came to see the shows, and they thought: 'there's another avenue for me; I don't have to be a classical performer and go and play in an orchestra. I can play pop music!' And suddenly the instrumentalists are making really good money. (ibid.)

Bass player Kerry Hiles, who was in the original Girl Talk reflects: 'I think all of us are quite proud of it, but a bit miffed we weren't taken seriously from the beginning! It was a very good platform' (Int. 2007).

Other productions that women interviewed performed in included Barnyard Theatre productions G-String and Natural Woman (Bentlage Int. 2006; del Mei Int. 2006; Ribeiro Int. 2006; Zlatkova Int. 2006) and earlier theatre productions like Feelin' Groovy (Rock Theatre Productions) which always had young women playing keyboards and saxophone in its various incarnations (del Mei 2006).

My intention here is certainly not to criticise the women who work in these situations: many of them are excellent instrumentalists and they are, after all, making a living, often through being entrepreneurial and versatile. Rather, I question why the phenomenon of these successful and prevalent groups in Johannesburg (revealed predominantly in interviews), and theatre shows with their increasing numbers of women instrumentalists exists. Returning to Mowday's comment about the paucity of virtuoso female jazz instrumentalists in South Africa, may offer illumination. Jazz appears to be a lonelier and more challenging genre for female instrumentalists. Does this other arena of live performance work and revenue for women musicians—corporate entertainment—offer steadier work and better remuneration? Can a woman be her own boss and tailor-make a 'product' that will attract clients more easily than in other genres? Do the stage shows which possibly hire a woman (over a male instrumentalist?) give her a fun opportunity to hone her craft, gain experience and secure a living? These rhetorical questions I pose have some truth in them.

[134] All-women band Clout sold over 25000 copies of their hit single 'Substitute' in the late 1970s. Muff Anderson writes that there was 'mild discomfort in the industry when it was discovered that the only member of Clout who'd played a major part on the record was vocalist Cindi Alter. Most of the backing tracks were laid down by other musicians, a regular practice in the promotion of *image* bands' (Anderson 1981:45).

For artists like Shannon Mowday, Siya Makuzeni or Kgaogelo Mailula who—in my interpretation of their experiences and aspirations—are musicians pursuing original, often improvised music, playing corporate entertainment gigs, for the most part, holds no appeal.[135] They may play such functions to make some money, but their hearts lie with music performance less tailored to the audience—or a client—and more to their own artistic intentions. For them, tension exists in attaining a balance between finding work through which to sustain their livelihood and keeping their sense of artistic integrity.

Compared to the era in which Lynette Leeuw was trying to break through as a female saxophonist and sustain a musical career, there are more opportunities for women in music in contemporary South Africa. However, as the discussion above reveals, the embodiment of women instrumentalists on stage limits them to certain areas of performance, such as all-women bands and glamorous function settings. Lesley Rankine of UK indie band Silverfish sums it up: 'I don't think women should have to use their sexuality as a tool for empowerment, but it is the instrument of power we have' (Evans 1994: 273).

Lastly, while all-women bands run the risk of being viewed as novelties, they seem an option most female instrumentalists have considered. With interest, I observe that the majority of the instrumentalists I interviewed have played in them at one time or another. For instance: violinist Kate O'Hanlan performed in the all-women jazz fusion band Madame Freak (their career highlight was performing at the 2001 North Sea Jazz Festival now renamed the Cape Town International Jazz Festival) (Int. 2006); Ndithini Mbali performed with an all-women black jazz band called The Jazz Maroons (she described them as 'old ladies' and said they have retired now) (Int. 2006); Lipalesa Lebabo was a founding member of Basadi (with whom she no longer performs) (Int. 2006); Cathy del Mei leads two all-women groups: Feminique and Candy (Int. 2, 2012); Kristel Birkholtz plays in all-female duo Intrique (Int. 2010), and Kerry Hiles and Abbey Artico were both performing in Artico's band She at the time of our interviews (Hiles has subsequently relocated to the Eastern Cape) and Artico played for Little Sister in the 1990s (Artico Int. 2006; Hiles Int. 2007). Other women have been hired to perform at the Women in Arts Festival in Newtown, Johannesburg and other annual performances associated with Women's Day annually (Levine Int. 2006; Mbali Int. 2006; Nhlangothi Int. 2006; Mowday Int. 2007). Shannon Mowday has participated in many

[135] Some of these function groups do perform their own music, yet it does not appear to be the focus of these function performances or reason for their sustainability.

all-women projects, including the Scandinavian-South African female jazz collaboration *Bitches Brew* and the 2012 Joy of Jazz Festival 'Sax Summit' which featured five female saxophone players playing the music of Kippie Moeketsi: Grace Kelly (US), Tineke Postma (The Netherlands), Rosemary Quaye (UK), Nthabiseng Mokoena (SA) and Mowday (SA).

Conclusion

This chapter contains many examples of women's creativity in fulfilling entertainment demands: women musicians use body image and choice of clothing to gain attention; they adopt role-play such as the 'little girl' part, or parody this role for satirical emphasis, or play a siren-role where sexuality takes priority; they choose to be individual and 'different' through looks, quirky performance and wit. Further the significant formation of girl-bands achieves recognition and managerial success for female musicians, and to some extent by-passes some of the less pleasing aspects of working with men. At best some women find opportunities to express their deepest musical creativity. The motivation for each of these areas is to gain career recognition as women musicians against certain odds. Yet in all these circumstances a dominant theme reappears in many guises, illustrated in this chapter and throughout this thesis: this is the pressure of male domination in popular music-making in the Gauteng region (but also in South Africa and in the wider world). This pressure is apparent in managerial and financial matters and in the numerical predominance of male musicians: however what has emerged overwhelmingly from my interviewees' comments is the constant battle women musicians wage against the stereotypes of male behaviour and belittlement, and against the expectation of providing visual stimulation to male satisfaction. Since stereotypes of spectatorship and performance have become so ingrained in audience expectation and performance management, women musicians as performers are often prepared to comply with these demands—just as women in social relationships frequently comply with patriarchal stereotypes. Further, it is not only in personal and professional relationships that women musicians often feel pressured by stereotype and/or personal behaviour, but it is also in journalism that these undesirable attitudes confront women, in the assumptions and language used—as shown in the 'Diva' section in particular. Such unthinking journalism inevitably helps to generate public attitudes, and so the problems roll on.

All this is not to say that women musicians do not receive valid support (as Chapter Two showed), but the insistence of gender stereotypes on women musicians' careers, as shown in this chapter, can challenge their confidence and, most importantly, their artistic integrity, musical competence and aspirations. That many of my respondents show considerable strength in facing the social, personal and musical challenges of their chosen careers is evident from their comments expressing resilience and sincere artistic aspiration. Building on the discussion in Chapter Three about performance versus artistry, comments in this chapter suggest that difficulties of personal, professional, journalistic, and social circumstances can be overcome with determination and the integrity of creative musical aspiration. So it becomes a form of creativity which enables women to deal with being considered sirens and songbirds, and with the constant pressure of visual and often sexualized expectations. Some embrace these stereotypes, others resist them, others even have fun with them. For example, when I saw Shannon Mowday perform at the Jazz Festival in Grahamstown before her performance at the Joy of Jazz Festival in Johannesburg in 2007, her virtuosity, musicality and dynamic stage manner received very enthusiastic audience response. In each performance she wore sexy, sophisticated dresses, yet moved athletically around the stage, at ease in playing frenetically impressive solos on either alto or baritone saxophone. When I asked her if she was deliberately playing with her image, and the expectations of a woman on stage, she acknowledged she did: 'Well, in Grahamstown I did that whole number, because people also look with their eyes, and in a funny kind of way I was trying to say: "yeah, I am a woman, and that's it, but I can also play". If I couldn't play, then I wouldn't be doing it.' With this statement Mowday speaks for all the women musicians: that the music, be it singing or instrumental, is their prime motivation.

CONCLUSION

'The fact that there have been no great women artists, so far as we know, although there have been many interesting and good ones … is regrettable, but no amount of manipulating the historical or critical evidence will alter the situation … The fault is not in our stars, our hormones, our menstrual cycles, or our empty internal spaces, but in our institutions and our education.'
—LINDA NOCHLIN (in Cosslett et al 1996: 5-6)

'Music is a wonderful thing to have access to.'
—ESPERANZA SPALDING (2011b)

'Time won't do it. There has to be an effort.'
—BILLY TAYLOR (Hentoff 2001: 166)

The central question of this study is: How does gender mark the professional lives of female musicians working in popular music in post-apartheid South Africa? If this area for discussion had not already arisen during the interview, I explicitly asked each woman towards the end of an interview: 'do you feel your gender affects your working life?' The answers to this question varied from 'no' (meaning 'gender has no impact on my music-making') to 'yes' (split between those who consider their gender to have positively or negatively impacted on their musical careers). A large proportion of the women replied that gender has both negatively and positively affected their careers; some weighted one over the other. Before I conclude this study, I shall 'replay' a few of my women interviewees' voices a last time with answers given in response to my direct question. Afterwards, I offer findings from the previous discussions in this thesis and my own response to the central question.

Several women, like Abbey Artico, answered 'no': they do not perceive gender to have impacted on their music-making. Others, like Janine Neethling, recognise that gender dynamics do come into play in music-making but reflect that gender is largely insignificant as to why they secure work (Int. 2006). Similarly, author and journalist Gwen Ansell said that she does not get hired because she is a woman. She does, however, comment that she works in a male-dominated field and there is often 'not prejudice, but an assumption that I may be male' (Int. 2007).

Others, who believed gender to have positively affected their careers, answered 'yes', like Cathy del Mei: 'I've made it work for me … You know I've never felt like I have undersold myself or felt like I'm degrading myself … I'm not ashamed to be female! Why should I feel bad I'm taking work away from a man? I don't feel bad' (Int. 2006). Similarly, as discussed in Chapter Four, other women musicians who work in the corporate entertainment field and theatre acknowledge that being a woman favourably affects the work they take on, and that having a glamorous or sexually-appealing feminine image is an important factor here:

> There are some women who have learnt to use their image successfully and have created appropriate boundaries while still portraying a sexy image ... There are also women musicians … who don't fit into the social norms of supermodel looks, and yet who manage to be authoritative and successful. I think on the whole the general idea is that you have to sell some sexual image or some high fashion image or something like that to be taken seriously. (Birkholtz Int. 2010)[136]

Significantly, it was one of the most beautiful women that I interviewed who takes the most umbrage at women's looks being taken into account as performers. A slim, fine-featured and elegant woman, jazz vocalist Wendy Twyford spoke with passion, and clearly from experience:

> Another thing I get pissed off about is when people say: oh she's got the look and she'll be great in the show. For me, number one, I want to be recognized and respected for my *talent*! Whether I am good-looking or not is really secondary for me. I think that is also what I find attractive in jazz: there doesn't have to be that very superficial, bimbo-y, plastic look that comes with being a jazz muso [musician]. You can be a big, fat, overweight mama who's belting it out, and people love what you do because it's about the voice and the musicality, and not about how tight your ass is, how good you look on stage or how sexy you are. I really hate that! I feel that belittles what women are *contributing* towards music. Yes, maybe look is important in the pop thing, but why do we have to merit people on their look, as opposed to their musicality? If you close your eyes, and you're enjoying the music, does it really matter what that person looks like? (2006)

Likewise, Bronwen Clacherty is aware that being a female percussionist affects the way people not only view her but *listen* to her, and wishes there was less emphasis on gender in people's reception of her:

> If I were to say anything about me, it would be that I'd like to form my own voice…but, oh, it's so hard! … Right now, I'm very aware about being a woman in music because of what I have to deal with everyday … I think that I get irritated when people call me chick, or a girl and judge me on that. (Int. 2007)[137]

Some women recognise but do not begrudge the challenges for women. Laurie Levine, for instance, makes a strong statement when she points out the 'misogyny of rock', but it does

[136] Kristel Birkholtz gave a startling example of this. When Italian singer Patrizzio, was hiring instrumentalists for a South African concert, the audition was a photograph: 'Can you believe it? We all had to submit photographs. It was an all-female orchestra, except for trombone or trumpet. We were handpicked from a bunch of photographs … I didn't feel that ok with that…but these opportunities are about networking' (Int. 2010).

[137] Clacherty spoke in the interview of 'learning to play louder', and this having a gender connotation for her. She equates her earlier softer technique with being shy and still discovering her instrument (referring specifically to the congos here), yet was constantly told she 'played like a girl' (Int. 2007).

not deter her from her chosen career path. Ayanda Nhlangothi too, had a perceptive response when I asked her if 'young women have to work hard to gain respect in the music industry':

> No, they don't have to work hard at all to gain any respect… A woman tends to put herself in the corner. So you have to decide: are you in the corner, or are you there? You have to make that decision, and I know it's a hard decision to make—the decision to be out there. …You are a woman, and it *is* tough—I don't think in music only—but in life. (Int. 2006)

She elaborated on this statement:

> The funny thing about the male/female thing in this industry is you have to choose: are you going to be a typical female or are you going to be straight with them with what you want, and stand your ground. Once they get the light part of you, they can always manipulate you, but if they get you like that [determined], they will hate you, but you will always achieve more … So you just have to choose as a woman: do you want to be assertive or not? (Int. 2007)

Nhlangothi's aunt, Tu Nokwe, who has guided Ayanda and other young musicians in their careers believes music is a hard career for women at times (Int. 2006). She feels support from family and a spiritual source are crucial:

> You have to have something with you. Know that God is with you, know that and live it, otherwise you can't cope. Have the support of your family, but ultimately you should have God in your life, and if you believe in something else Ultimate, then that's what you should go for. (ibid.)

Tu and Marilyn Nokwe produced Ayanda's first recording, in part to buffer her from any tension with older male producers, musicians and A & R managers (Nhlangothi Int. 2006; Nokwe Int. 2006). 'When I'm alone with them [male colleagues], it's different' explained Nhlangothi (Int. 2006). This vignette reveals both a less than ideal gender relationship, and the need for protection from older women (similar to the idea of the male protector which I discussed in Chapter Two).

The two areas where women most felt that their gender influences their music-making (although not only negatively) are in playing instruments considered to be traditionally 'male' and in being in the role of bandleader. I discussed extreme moments of male prejudice with regard to women instrumentalists at length in Chapter Four. Jazz musicians, certainly, seem to encounter negative stereotypes most often. For instance, one man said to Pam Mortimer 'You don't have the balls to play jazz. It's a man's world' while another said 'just sing' (Int. 2006). Less severe than these comments is the surprise that some women mentioned as a commonplace initial reaction to their playing certain instruments. Bass player, Kerry Hiles, gives one example:

> I walked into the studio with my bass guitar, and they were waiting for my boyfriend to follow me, because *he* must be the bass player. 'No, *I* am the bass player that you booked for the session. Really sorry to disappoint you everybody!' … just about every session I have done has been: 'ok, so where is your boyfriend?' No, this is *my* gear! (Int. 2007)

Sex-stereotyping about instruments is not only in male perception. Laurie Levine, for instance, commented on the paucity of 'good' female guitarists: 'The guitar really is the basis of so much modern female music today, so why is it such a male-dominated instrument? Is it because men really are better? Or is it a perception thing? I haven't seen many female guitarists who are as good as men' (Int. 2006).

Another tension is that for female bandleaders who often have to deal with male resistance to their assuming such roles. Their competent musicianship often dispels negative stereotypes. Tu Nokwe explains:

> I'm not afraid to lead my band, and I respect my musicians, but they know their place. Guys always try to push you … I'll listen if they make suggestions, but please don't feel bad if I don't take it … You have to kind of work hard and try to mother the band, and trick them … Make them feel comfortable all the time … Even though you stay with them for a long time, there are still egos…(Int. 2006)

Shannon Mowday perhaps speaks for all the women when she says:

> What we play is life. If you are true to that, and everyone is true to that thing, then there is respect, whether you're a female, male, black, white, pink, yellow, green, whatever. Respect. (Int. 2007)

Sadly she goes on to say:

> And respect is not something people cherish. Everyone bitches about each other's playing, instead of helping each other. There's a very negative vibe about the music scene here. That's why I love doing this kind of thing [teaching youth jazz workshops], because everybody's trying to grow, everybody's trying to learn. I think if everybody just had that space for each other … then…wow! (ibid.)

The above statements certainly show that the women who choose and continue in a career in music-making have a strong sense of purpose and develop ways of dealing with the positives and negatives in the people and experiences they meet with, most particularly dealing with gender issues as well as they can. Further questions arise, however, which all have a bearing on such careers. The first concern is education, including music tuition, and their family and social background and support systems. These are covered in Chapter Two, where the evidence of the interviews shows that there is considerable care and support, even if there are tensions. Certainly there is less negative pressure on young women who are entering a music career in post-apartheid South Africa now than in the first half of the twentieth century (the only well-documented era with regard to gender relations and popular music-making).

The above comments by a range of my informants demonstrate that my central question cannot be answered adequately in a single response. Nonetheless, the sense that gender does and does not mark the professional lives of female musicians is conveyed. My own position

is that gender most certainly does leave its mark, and not always in positive or expected ways. One must carefully consider too that female musicians are, for the most part, deeply aware that making strong, feminist statements may not positively enhance their careers or how male colleagues perceive them. Their music and musicianship, as well as resilience in continuing along their chosen career paths, remain the more powerful tools in managing sexism when it arises.

The evidence presented in this thesis suggests that more women are able to sustain careers in the music industry, and are moving into traditionally 'male' domains such as being instrumentalists, genres such as jazz and roles such as musical direction and bandleading. Not as positive, however, are some of the challenges experienced in doing so. Blatant sexism is often more easily dealt with than more insidious infusions of sexism that mark many female experiences, both in the realm of musical performance and in everyday life. Though this study of twenty eight women's professional lives in music by no means purports to be comprehensive, it nonetheless offers several insights into the challenges still facing women in music, such as needing to deal with popular and not always pleasant stereotypes about women. Women can be 'divas' and the sex-stereotyping of instruments are two examples of this.

Another observation I must make—one not necessarily previously made because of my decision to avoid value-judgements on my respondents—is that remarkably few of the women I interviewed are actively involved as writers and composers of music. That relatively few of the women I spoke to have established solo careers, compose their own music or, for that matter, lead bands and productions, possibly reveals the fact that women still find places in music in more traditional roles, like that of singer for instance. I believe this also raises questions about how women are educated in music, and to what extent negative or unchallenged stereotypes pervade current syllabi and the thinking of music educators. This is certainly a fertile area for future research, as there is evidence in contemporary South Africa that while the historical exclusion of women from certain types of musical performance and music-making is receding, it is not yet eradicated.

Gender can be declared to affect positively the lives of the many women interviewed who make their living giving performances at corporate events. Certainly this is a niche market for women musicians. Far less positive, is how such a phenomenon in the end does very

little to challenge the stereotypes surrounding women instrumentalists. It would be interesting to interview male musicians on this subject, since one can speculate that if denied such financially-lucrative work that mostly women succeed in acquiring, they may feel negative about not only this type of performing work being available, but also the female musicians who get it. Certainly, this was a subject often broached off the record in interviews. Viewed in this context, women may be creating new professional spaces for themselves, but the consequential gender relations in the workplace and society in general may not be entirely positive. It is in jazz, ironically—for jazz was always the stronghold of macho idealism and sexist views of female musicians—that women may be having the most positive influence in challenging negative stereotypes. These jazz women may negotiate gender-related challenges within their careers, but their presence in the public sphere does much to make a positive statement about what women musicians do and can achieve.

An important area that does emerge as discussed in Chapter One is the issue of career rights in relation to the law. Education in legal rights, and also knowledge about journalistic practice, is increasingly important and access to such training and awareness should be made available.[138] The rights available to women under the current South African constitution and legal recourse they can take when needed are explained towards the end of Chapter One. Many of the women I interviewed, however, were unaware of their exact legal rights, and so it would be positive for such factual information to be accessed and disseminated by institutions such as unions and educational institutions. Given the post-apartheid situation of gender equality and human rights, further change in gender experience should be openly confronted in educational situations. The issue of gender tension emerges clearly from the evidence of the many experiences related in these chapters, and education in personal rights is essential for development. This will lead to further research to investigate the extent to which these laws actually affect the lives of women musicians—and other career women too. A point of concern to me during the course of this research, was the difficulty in contacting a representative at either the Performing Arts Workers Equity (PAWE) or the

[138] The 2006 Media Monitering Project's study on arts coverage in the South African mass media highlights several areas of concern, including: the status of the arts journalist is very low in the newsroom ('Hisses and Whistles' online: 59); he/she is remunerated less that other journalists (ibid.: 60); newspapers offer 'shrinking space' for arts coverage and are negatively affected by commercial imperatives with regard to quality reporting (ibid.: 62); the SABC's involvement is unclear and yet requested by media organisations, and lastly, there exists gender and racial bias in arts reporting in South Africa (ibid.: 68). One cannot make glib statements about challenging gender stereotypes in the media without further research to link areas of concern in different professional fields—such as journalism and the creative industries—and their impact on cultural and social meaning in contemporary South Africa.

South African Performing Artist's Union who was willing to be interviewed. Certainly engaging with the unions that female musicians may join and access is an area for further research, and one which could potentially have a positive impact on both gender relations in the music industry.

In Chapter Four I explored stereotypes about women's bodies on stage that permeate the reception of both women vocalists and instrumentalists. I also argued that these stereotypes, which standardise expectations about what roles women should fulfill, appear not just in the media, but, detrimentally, in texts written with more serious philosophic and educational intent. These discussions are not intended as an assault on all male writers of music historiographies. I acknowledge the valuable contribution of previous scholarship in the field of South African popular music (particularly the music of black South Africans), and wish simply to contribute to a more gender-sensitive discourse in the public sphere that will positively influence both women making music, and gender relations at large in the post-apartheid moment.

A further topic for research could be into the extent to which the changing political, social and economic circumstances have actually altered music-making. Certainly my research shows that women are moving into genres of jazz and of new genres, significantly with the mention of Nu-Folk and jazz and the development of all-women bands. In addition there are more women instrumentalists, including some who play instruments regarded as more appropriate for men.

Recalling the revealing juxtaposition of Lara Allen and Christopher Ballantine's positions analysed in Chapter One, I also suggest that further research that investigates the perspectives of male musicians in relation to gender issues would be valuable. This thesis describes in detail much of the location of female experience, but future research along the lines of gender, broadened to incorporate the male domain of musical experience, would encourage positive dialogue between female and male perspectives.

In January 2013 I asked Alan Webster who directs and administers the most broad-reaching youth music education workshops nationwide at the annual Standard Bank National Youth Jazz Festival, why there appears to be a substantial decline in female students at tertiary level

in South Africa as compared with secondary education. In response, he asserted: 'There are many factors that impact on the female drop-out rate, but my guess is that the predominant one is the nature of the South African jazz industry. I have often asked the question of what our jazz would sound like if we harnessed 100% of the young musicians coming through, and not just the male ones.'[140] Such an insightful question from a male South African musician and educator, seems a positive way to end this thesis, and one which I hope future research and music-making will answer.

[140] Written in personal communication with the author, and quoted with Webster's permission.

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