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A Research Itinerary from Fieldwork to Archives: Cape Town (South Africa), Festivals, Music, 'Identities,' Politics

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Abstract

For more than twenty years (from 1992 till 2015) I did research on the New Year Festivals which are organised at the beginning of every year in Cape Town (South Africa). These festivals include three series of competitions: between carnival troupes named *Klopse* (from the English clubs), between male choirs called Malay Choirs and between Christian brass bands known as Christmas Choirs or Christmas Bands. In the course of this research I conducted a great number of interviews, videoed and photographed the festivals and their preparations, collected many printed documents on which I based several articles, book chapters and books (in English and in French); I also recorded a CD with a local choir singing for the *Klopse* as well as for the Malay Choirs and produced a video documentary on the 1994 edition of the festival. In this paper I explain the conditions in which I conducted this research, underlining the importance of the partnership I entered into with major actors of the festivals, and signal the implications of such partnerships. I also discuss the conditions in which my documentation was constituted and why most of it was deposited with a South African musical archive.

Keywords: Cape Town (South Africa), carnival, festivals, musics, coloureds, fieldwork, archives.

Résumé

Un itinéraire de recherche du terrain aux archives : Le Cap (Afrique du Sud), fêtes, musiques, 'identités', politique

De 1992 à 2015, j'ai poursuivi une recherche au Cap, en Afrique du Sud, portant sur les fêtes du Nouvel An, consistant en compétitions de troupes de carnaval (*Klopse*), de chœurs masculins (*Malay Choirs*) et de fanfares chrétiennes (*Christmas Choirs*). Au

cours de cette recherche, j'ai enregistré de nombreux entretiens, filmé et photographié les manifestations festives et leurs préparatifs, collecté de la documentation imprimée, tous matériaux qui ont servi à la rédaction de nombreux textes en français et en anglais, qu'un film documentaire et un CD ont complétés. Cet article retrace les conditions dans lesquelles j'ai effectué cette recherche au long cours. Il souligne le partenariat indispensable avec des acteurs importants de ces fêtes ainsi que ses implications. Il indique enfin comment la documentation a été collectée puis déposée aux archives d'un centre de documentation musicale en Afrique du Sud.

Mots-clefs : Le Cap (Afrique du Sud), carnaval, fêtes, musique, *coloureds*, terrain, archives.

Resumo

Um itinerário de pesquisa do terreno aos arquivos: Cidade do Cabo (África do Sul), festas, música, 'identidades', política

De 1992 a 2015, realizei uma investigação na cidade do Cabo, na África do Sul, relativa às festividades do Ano Novo, as quais consistem em competições de grupos carnavalescos (*Klopse*), de coros masculinos (*Malay Choirs*) e de fanfarras cristãs (*Christmas Choirs*). No decurso desta pesquisa gravei numerosas entrevistas, filmei e fotografei as manifestações festivas e respectivos preparativos, recolhi documentação impressa. Esses materiais serviram de base à redacção de textos em francês e inglês, completados por um filme documental e um CD. O artigo descreve as condições em que efectuei a investigação ao longo do tempo. Sublinha ainda a parceria indispensável com protagonistas importantes destas festas assim como as suas implicações. Finalmente explica como foi realizada a recolha de documentação, posteriormente depositada nos arquivos de um centro de documentação musical sul-africano.

Palavras-chave: Cidade do Cabo (África do Sul), carnaval, festas, música, *coloureds*, terreno, arquivos.

A Research Itinerary from Fieldwork to Archives: Cape Town (South Africa), Festivals, Music, ‘Identities,’ Politics

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Translated by Nancy Sabatier

Dataset related to this article: “Cape Town (South Africa), festivals, music, ‘identities,’ politics.” Website: <https://cape-town-festivals.nakala.fr/>

Data collection: <https://nakala.fr/collection/10.34847/nkl.df4au56x>

These data consist of 136 documents (texts, press cuts, photos, videos, sound files...) divided into 12 sections. See also “List of sources” at the end of the article.

From 1992 to 2015, in the course of my research in Cape Town, South Africa, I recorded many interviews, filmed and photographed festivals and their preparations, and collected printed material. All of these were used for the writing of many articles, which were supplemented by a video documentary and a CD.¹ This project addressed a double question which had been at the core of some of my previous studies: identity construction processes and their use in politics, which were analysed in two collective works (Martin 1994; 2010), and the relations between politics and cultural practices (especially music and popular festivals), practices in which the place of identity configurations constitutes a factor that is certainly important (Martin 2001; 2002; 2020). The hypothesis underlying these studies was that, to reach the most complex, most affective aspects of social representations of power and its organizations—aspects that are very difficult to verbalize—questionnaires or structured interviews were inadequate, and hence an approach through cultural practices, using observations (recordings and videos potentially usable for symbolic analysis) and non-directive interviews (especially group ones), would be more fruitful. I had tested this hypothesis in Trinidad and Tobago and, when the opportunity arose to undertake a wider study in South Africa, I chose to start from this premise and to attempt applying the required methods more systematically.

In fact, when writing the project I was planning to carry out in Cape Town, I knew very little about South Africa, and even less about the realities of this city. I had read about apartheid, and had a keen interest in the progress of the struggles against racism and segregation in this country. I had had the opportunity to discuss this with South African refugees, in particular with the academic and activist Ruth First and with the musician Chris McGregor, but I had not been able to go there as South African

1. See “List of Sources” below.

authorities refused entry visa to journalists or researchers perceived as hostile. However, I had managed to spend a few days in Johannesburg and Pretoria in 1981: I was then director of the Centre of Research, Exchange and Scholarly Documentation (*Centre de recherche, d'échanges et de documentation universitaire*, CREDU) in Nairobi (which later became French Institute for Research in Africa; *Institut français de recherche en Afrique*, IFRA), and thus benefited from a service passport that allowed visa-free entry into South Africa. I therefore decided to go there to discuss with the French Embassy in Pretoria the possibility of developing exchanges between French and South African universities, which, at first, was not considered favourably. This stay nevertheless allowed me to witness, albeit superficially, the reality of apartheid, and to attend a performance of *Woza Albert!*, a play by Percy Mtwa, Mbongeni Ngema, and Barney Simon,² which condemned apartheid with highly energetic and caustic wit in front of the non-segregated audience of the Market Theater in Johannesburg. I thus discovered that, under the brutal rule of PW Botha, the Prime Minister at a time when the weight of apartheid was particularly heavy, the government cunningly allowed a few, very limited spaces for interracial cooperation, which it intended to brandish before the eyes of the world, and which it thought could be used to weaken internal opposition: things were more complicated than I thought. I could not return to South Africa before the end of 1990, when, after many difficulties, I was granted a visa following an invitation to give a lecture at the Africa Institute in Pretoria. During this trip, I recorded interviews with jazz musicians in Johannesburg (Martin 1992). Then, I returned to Johannesburg in 1991, discovered Cape Town in 1992, and began to check there the feasibility of the research I considered doing on the New Year festivals held in this city, but of which I knew practically nothing.

I would like to offer here an account of the way this work was carried out by tracing back my research itinerary which started with little knowledge either of the subject (the New Year festivals, *Nuwe Jaar* in Afrikaans), or of their social and geographic environments (Cape Town and its suburbs). This research, which lasted much longer than I initially expected, resulted in the collection of a large amount of material: recorded interviews, video shots, photos, and printed documents (including press cuttings), the use and archiving of which I discuss below.

From Lot-et-Garonne to Cape Town via Nantes

Besides the country's political developments, I have been especially interested for a long time in the music created in South Africa. Thus, in 1972, at the request of *Jazz Magazine*, I met the composer, bandleader, and pianist Chris McGregor who became my friend. The idea for my project on the New Year festivals originated during a visit at his home in the 1980s, after his move to Lot-et-Garonne. Leafing through an illustrated book about the 1950s,³ I was amazed to discover photos of scenes and

2. *Woza Albert!* (Mtwa, Ngema and Simon 1983), a satirical play first performed in Johannesburg in 1981.

3. Probably Breytenbach (1970).

actors taken during a “carnival” organized in Cape Town. I was further astonished to find out that an event called “carnival” had been celebrated since the beginning of the 20th century in the “Mother City”⁴ of South Africa, by inhabitants categorized as “coloureds” who belonged mostly to the working class and the lower middle class; their costumes, make up, and name, “coons,” were inspired by the aesthetics of blackface minstrel shows in the United States, shows which had been condemned for their racist connotations. These apparently paradoxical photos of festivities organized in January and February, in which people who were themselves victims of institutional racism repeated features generally regarded as racist, raised many questions. I gradually discovered that it was necessary to consider a set of festivals in which various types of groups compete against each other, including ‘carnivals,’⁵ and competitions of male choirs (*Singkoore* or Malay Choirs⁶) and Christian brass bands (Christmas Choirs). Together, these constituted the “New Year festivals,” seen as a renewal ritual. Moreover, successive interviews convinced me that the term “coon” (a racist insult in the United States) and the aesthetics of blackface minstrels had, in Cape Town, been totally dissociated from their origin to take a different meaning linked to the pleasure of celebrations and their resulting feeling of liberation. Yet, a concern for “political correctness” prompted organizers and troupe leaders to use the term “Minstrels” rather than “Coons,” which was still associated with blackface shows in the United States. Eventually they reverted to the original Afrikaans name of *Klops* (club). Therefore, today, *Klopse* (the plural of *Klops*) is used officially to refer to the troupes, and *Kaapse Klopse Karnaval* (carnival of Cape Town clubs) for the carnival, but many participants still use “Coons,” and keep calling themselves as such. But, in the early 1990s, when apartheid was beginning to crumble, I had no knowledge about all this, I only had in mind the intriguing photos I had seen at Chris McGregor’s. Thus, when Jean-Luc Domenach, then the director of the Centre for International Research and Studies (*Centre d’études de relations internationales*, CERI, Sciences Po Paris⁷), encouraged me to “do something” on South Africa, since it would now be possible to enter the country and carry out research as an academic, I proposed to investigate this carnival, a subject in line with my previous work.

After an exploratory mission in Cape Town in October 1992, I handed over to the management of CERI, in November 1992, a project entitled *Sous les masques, l’Afrique du Sud... Métissage culturel, représentations sociales et perceptions politiques: le carnaval du Nouvel An au Cap, Afrique du Sud* (“Behind the Masks, South Africa... Cultural Mixing, Social Representations and Political Perceptions: the New Year

4. Nickname given to Cape Town since it is from Cape Bay that South Africa’s colonisation started.

5. In the English meaning of the word, i.e., a large, exceptional event, not necessarily linked to the Christian calendar; since 1907, several have been organised each year by rival boards, in different stadiums where costumed troupes (Coons or *Klopse*) oppose each other; see “Chronicles of the Kaapse Klopse”: <https://doi.org/10.34847/nkl.92efbl79>.

6. Here again, organised by different boards.

7. Laboratory where I was a researcher since 1969.

Carnival in Cape Town, South Africa”). Its premise was that “the study of collective popular expressions (i.e., expressions accepted by all members of a community as emanating from that community, although individuals might be recognised as important in their creation) that do not carry explicit political messages, would provide relatively uncensored material containing representations of the political. These representations would be teased out by an analysis encompassing symbolisms and structures, the clash between open and underlying messages.” The project ambition was “to grasp how, at a pivotal period in South Africa’s history, a community which is a minority in number,⁸ but which represents a sort of “cultural condensate” of South Africa, contemplates changes for itself and for the whole country.”

This project was accepted, and I was given the necessary funds to carry out at least the first phase of the investigation, which was to combine observation (non-participatory) of the festivities held at the start of the year, library research, and interviews. These were the basics that guided my investigations to the very end, and according to which I organized my work. I planned to arrive in Cape Town in December 1993 to be present at the beginning of the festivities, as soon as New Year’s Eve, and to have time to make or renew the necessary contacts to attend these festivities in the best conditions.

Developing the fieldwork

From there on, I had to develop my fieldwork. I started from the principle⁹ that the “fieldwork” is not a given, but is built for the needs of particular research, according to its hypotheses and its objectives; built within the limits set by the physical and social realities in which the researcher works; and developed during the interaction between investigators and those investigated.

At first, I had very few sources of support: Catherine Lauga-Glenn (later Du Plessis), a friend of my late colleague from CERI Marie-France Toinet, who taught at the University of Cape Town (UCT), and who warmly offered help (including accommodation for a while) and a few contacts; Val Steyn, director of the Pace

8. People categorised as “coloureds” since the beginning of the 20th century (before, black Africans could also be categorised with this label) are mostly descended from slaves imported into South Africa between 1652 and 1807 from Indonesia, India, Madagascar, and several regions of continental Africa, to which were added any individuals whom racist authorities who succeeded each other in the 20th century failed to categorise as “European” or “indigenous” (native, Bantus, terminologies varied). They were a minority at national level, but a majority in the regions today forming the province of Western Cape. Placed between whites and black Africans in the hierarchical classification of racist powers, but most despised (as supposed “bastards,” without history or culture), they nevertheless played a major role in the emergence of an original South African culture, be it language (Afrikaans), cuisine or music. One of the symbolic functions of the New Year festivities is to remind of this.

9. Inspired by Jean-Pierre Olivier de Sardan who considers that, for the anthropologist, “fieldwork thus constitutes a set of resources and constraints that define the core of anthropological specificity. But make no mistake: these constraints and resources are intended to stimulate the anthropological imagination, not to restrain it” (Olivier de Sardan 2008, 22).

Dance Company, whom I met at the Nantes Summer Festival in 1992 and who, after I explained my project, invited me to visit her in Cape Town. There, she admitted that she hardly knew the New Year festivities, and suggested that I meet Chris Syren, director of “Making Music,” a music show production company, who in turn gave me phone numbers for the organizers of the two main carnivals at that time: Melvyn Matthews and Victor Adams. In academia, Professor Renfrew Leslie Christie, Dean of Research at the University of the Western Cape (UWC), whom I met during a CERI delegation visit to South Africa in October 1992—a visit which I extended in Cape Town before writing the research proposal I was to submit a month later—received my project favourably and agreed to welcome me into his university; I was therefore attached in 1994 to the English department headed first by David Bunn, then by Peter Merrington,¹⁰ in exchange for a seminar on “culture and politics.” Finally, Simon Bekker, professor of sociology at the University of Stellenbosch and a regular guest at the Center for Black Africa Studies (*Centre d'études d'Afrique noire*, CEAN, Sciences Po Bordeaux¹¹), who had invited me to participate in a work group on identities in South Africa, told me about the founding of an Institute of Advanced Studies at Stellenbosch and introduced me to its future director, Professor Lategan. The latter encouraged me to apply for a research residency, which would allow me to pursue my investigations in Cape Town. The Stellenbosch Institute of Advanced Studies (STIAS) was inaugurated. I was welcomed there in 2007, and again in 2013 and 2015, with both material support and environment of exceptional quality. In all, I was able to carry out 17 missions in Cape Town from 1993 to 2015 which were funded mainly by CERI, CEAN-LAM, the French National Centre for Scientific Research (*Centre national de la recherche scientifique*, CNRS), the French Institute of South Africa (*Institut français d'Afrique du Sud*, IFAS- Research), and STIAS.

Interlocutors and networks

As early as 1992, I had got in touch with Melvyn Matthews, the head of the Cape Town Original Coon Carnival, then, in 1993, I had met Victor Adams, the promoter of the District Six Coon Carnival Board. The latter had been very kind and had let me attend and film the various days of “his” carnival, but my project had not really

10. Being attached to the English department surprised me, as I thought I would rather belong to the departments of sociology, anthropology or political sciences, but I quickly understood, firstly, that this type of research was still far from being legitimate in South African universities (except among pioneers of “cultural studies” who belonged to the English department), and secondly, that a suspicion of subservience to, or even collusion with, apartheid still lingered over all coloured cultural events. To overcome these issues, I was helped by UWC officials and lecturers, former anti-apartheid activists who were active within the African National Congress before 1990: Renfrew Christie, Vice-Chancellor Jakes Gerwel, Rhoda Kadalie, a teacher in the Department of anthropology, and Kader Asmal, professor of human rights and future minister.

11. Which later became “Africas in the World” (*Les Afriques dans le monde*, LAM)

interested him. Melvyn Matthews, on the other hand, quickly understood my goal, and decided to help me all he could. He thus became, and remains today, one of my main interlocutors in “the world of New Year festivities.”¹² Melvyn Matthews introduced me to my other main interlocutor, Anwar Gambeno, a troupe captain and choirmaster in charge of a choir competition. This “active support” by the pivotal elements in a network of players involved in the New Year festivities led to a risk of “encliquement”¹³ (being included in a clique) of which I became aware over the years. But the network that adopted me was extremely rich and extended beyond the confines of the rival “cliques”—with ever-shifting borders—of the fieldwork in which I was investigating.

This network was further supplemented and, in a way, “counterbalanced” by contacts that I had been able to make through other connections, notably thanks to Vincent Kolbe, former librarian at the Public Libraries of Bonteheuwel and Kensington (coloured townships), an anti-apartheid activist, musician, and living encyclopaedia of Cape Town culture; to Chris Ferndale, former activist of the United Democratic Front (UDF¹⁴), a staff member first at Cape Town town hall, then at the regional parliament of Western Cape, and poet familiar with the local jazz circles; and to Achmat Davids, a social worker, linguist, expert on the history and specificities of Islam in Cape Town, in particular its tolerance towards music.¹⁵ Having weighed the pros and cons of my special relationship with Melvyn Matthews and Anwar Gambino, I quickly decided to stick to it. Friendship ties which develop in this type of investigation should also be mentioned: they were key at the start, then were lastingly woven with some of my interlocutors, and their undeniable significance always seemed fruitful for my work in Cape Town; perhaps this is sentimental bias, but I believe it is unavoidable and often productive in this type of research.

However fruitful they are, these ties present risks besides “encliquement”: ethnography, and consequently some analysis results, can become biased. Besides the use of several networks of interlocutors, which did not question the ties with

12. To paraphrase Howard Becker (Becker, 2010)

13. “The researcher's integration into a society is never done in the society as a whole, but through particular groups. He fits into some networks and not into others. This bias is as formidable as it is unavoidable. The researcher can always be assimilated, often despite himself, but sometimes with his complicity, in a ‘clique’ or in a local ‘clan’, which results in a double drawback. On the one hand, he is at risk of over-reflecting the views of his adoptive ‘clique’ and taking up its views. On the other hand, he is at risk of alienating the other local ‘cliques’” (Olivier de Sardan 2020).

14. A group of anti-apartheid organizations, launched in 1983 by Allan Boesak. At the forefront of the internal struggle, it organized demonstrations and led educational projects inspired by the Freedom Charter adopted in 1955 by anti-apartheid movements, including the African National Congress.

15. See Davids (1985, 36-38). Achmat Davids was kind enough to “launch me into the field” so to speak, by inviting me to join friends to attend the Malay Choirs parade (called *Nagtroepe*, Night Troupes, for this occasion) during the night of New Year's Eve 1993-1994.

the main partners, three safeguards appeared to be effective: subjecting the studied cases to comparative perspective (in particular the festivals); using musical analysis based on the study of the intrinsic characteristics of music, which excludes any aesthetic judgment; finally, using history to contextualise contemporary practices and to facilitate a more objective understanding of them.

Investigations

Once the fieldwork had been delineated by the project and gradually marked out by the networks of interlocutors and partners,¹⁶ I undertook three types of investigations: observation of New Year festivities in 1994; interviews with actors and commentators of these events; and research and reading of texts dedicated to them. These provided working documents which, once my research was completed, constituted my investigation archives.

Observation

1994 was a special year for South Africa, when the country held its first elections by universal suffrage, marking the end of apartheid, if not of its consequences.¹⁷ The festivals took place a few months before in a tense atmosphere, marred by attacks and by fear of widespread violence. Among many people classified “coloured,” and especially the most deprived, there was added uncertainty—fuelled by white conservatives using prejudices instilled by more than a century and a half of “pale power” (Thion 1969)—as to how they would be treated by a government perceived as “African.” The New Year festivities thus had a peculiar tone: both a resounding declaration of the coloureds’ historic role in Cape Town and repeated calls for peace.

Two main carnivals were organized that year: one by the District Six Coon Carnival Board in Green Point Stadium; the other by the Cape Town Original Coon Carnival at the Green Point Cycle Track. Since these two venues were close to each other, it was easy for me to go from one to the other to observe, film and take pictures. I used the videos, which supplemented observation, for the symbolic analysis of the sequence of events, the costumes, the body language, and the musical repertoires. These videos provided the material for a documentary (Martin 2009). The photos were also included and were used to illustrate some publications and the CD cover (The Tulips 2002). I could not attend other carnivals, but I followed their development remotely thanks to video recordings sent by Melvyn Matthews. However, in the following years, I was able to listen to choir competitions and, for those I could not attend, collect audio or video recordings.

16. Preferred to “informants,” which has connotations of unidirectional exchange of information related to criminality.

17. See for example Gervais-Lambony (2009) and Tournadre (2014).

Interviews

At the same time, at the end of 1993, I started recording a series of interviews that would continue until 2015, first on the *Klopse* carnival, then on all the various genres of music played in Cape Town,¹⁸ and in particular the *Singkoore* competitions.¹⁹ During the first investigations in 1994, I had felt the need to have a research assistant. After a first attempt with a UWC student proved unsatisfactory, I was put in touch with Gadidja Vallie,²⁰ who helped me greatly: making appointments for interviews, navigating the coloured townships, translating from Afrikaans when necessary, and conducting a telephone survey on a sample of troupe “captains.” Later, I learned to work alone.²¹ All interviews were recorded in English, most of them on tape, then on mini-disc, then as digital files. From the end of 1993 to May 2015 I collected more than 90 audio interviews, including 9 group interviews. These were supplemented by two video interviews with carnival veterans, and two round tables at the Stellenbosch Institute of Advanced Studies in 2007.²² These interviews, using non-directive methods as much as possible,²³ were systematically transcribed (with the exception of the video interviews).

Documentation

When I undertook this research, I naively thought that the story of New Year festivities had already been written and that I could just use second-hand materials to

18. Not only those related to New Year festivities, but also coloured dance music (*langarm*), jazz, rap, white rock, “classical” music from European tradition, etc. See Martin (2013).

19. The term “Malay” has been used in Cape Town to refer to Muslim coloureds; it does not refer to a geographical origin, but to the languages spoken by slaves coming from contemporary Indonesian territories, which belong to the Malay group, as well as to Malayo-Portuguese Creole, spoken during early colonisation by settlers and slaves from these territories. See Davids (2011), Gaulier and Martin (2017).

20. The friendship links that led me to her started with Maxine McGregor, the widow of Chris (deceased in 1990), who advised me to meet Jimi Matthews, then working at the local branch of public broadcaster SABC (also author of a remarkable documentary on music in the 1980s [Matthews 1989], a copy of which he very kindly gave me), who in turn advised me to talk to Gadidja Vallie.

21. However, when I focused on the choirs’ repertoires, sung in Afrikaans, I was fortunate to be able to call upon Paul Sedres, whom I knew thanks to Lorraine Roubertie (see below), who translated the lyrics and identified the sources of some of the songs.

22. These gathered academic experts on various musical genres to discuss the issue of “What is South African Music?” and musicians representative of the various genres particularly played in Cape Town to discuss “What is Cape Town Music?”

23. However, in this type of investigation, it is difficult to separate open questions—starting with a very general prompt such as “What do the Coons [the carnival] mean to you?” to invite verbalisation of representations—from factual information questions; conducting individual, seldom repeated interviews most often involved managing this double dimension with interlocutors who sometimes found talking to a white academic intimidating and who were not accustomed to discuss such matters; non-directive group interviews, which often started with a screening of carnival videos, presented less difficulties.

focus on contemporary issues. In fact, except for being mentioned as part of folklore in journalistic works on Cape Town and for a few elusive notes in historians' books, only three serious works presented a preliminary analysis. The first is the pioneering study by Gerald L. Stone (psychotherapist and linguist, one of the few white people to have been a member of a carnival troupe, and whom I met thanks to Melvyn Matthews), which is an unpublished presentation at the University of Cape Town (Stone 1971). Gerald Stone, very generously, not only handed me a copy of this text, but also shared part of his archives with me. The two other texts are publications by the historian Shamil Jeppie (Jeppie and Levitan 1990; Jeppie 1990), professor at the University of Cape Town (UCT), who later kindly helped me to understand the place of Islam in the coloureds' social life and culture. From a historical point of view, fundamental work remained to be done.

I thus spent many days at the remarkably well-organized National Library of South Africa, assisted by extremely helpful staff. There, I was able to browse, and when necessary photocopy, clippings from old collections of Cape Town newspapers, from which I recorded any report of New Year festivities and the entertainments that predated them from the mid-19th century, notably those mentioning local performances by American blackface minstrel troupes, whether white or African-American. I was also able to look through books and magazines in which I thought I might find useful information. This library work was supplemented by less intensive work at the documentation centre of the Centre for African Studies at UCT, and by the purchase of books from Clarke's,²⁴ an outstanding bookstore on Long Street. This material was used to establish the chronology of the invention of Creole cultural practices in Cape Town, to understand how *Klopse* competitions and competitions of *Singkoore* developed from 1907, and to construct a list of the troupes mentioned in the press (far from exhaustive, and full of spelling errors made by white journalists struggling to understand the Afrikaans dialect and the pronunciation of coloured festivalgoers, but nevertheless very useful). All this resulted in my *Chronicles of the Kaapse Klopse*, which presented historical views of the New Year festivities and the Capetonian events that preceded them, from 1707 to 1996. These chronicles were initially published on the website of the "virtual laboratory" called Critical World, University of Montreal, and are filed on the [HAL platform](#) and on the [Nakala platform](#) (see "List of Sources"). I was thus able to contribute to the outlining of a hitherto neglected history.

Involvement of research partnerships

Researchers in the field need local partners: some provide information and contacts, others agree to spare time to meet and answer questions. These relationships must lead to reciprocation. I have always refused to pay these partners,²⁵ although I knew

24. See "List of Sources" below.

25. Just one man, of all the people I met, demanded to be paid. He was elderly and his experience and recollection of festivals and music was considerable. After a first interview, recorded and

that I owed them and that, at least for some of them, I would have to find a way to thank them. When I introduced myself, I was always careful to stress that my work was not journalistic and that I did not belong to the world of music production.

However, in France, when South Africa was the subject of special events, I was sometimes asked by the organisers to advise on the program content. In these cases, I suggested to those involved and who most often made exploratory trips on site, that they listen to bands led by my main interlocutors, Melvyn Matthews and Anwar Gambeno. I could by no means be considered a musical programmer, I was merely an “influencer,” but as a result of my advice, the Tulips and the Cape Traditional Singers, bands directed by Anwar Gambeno, as well as a brass band from the street band movement launched by Melvyn Matthews, were invited to perform in France: in 1997, at the *Fin de siècle à Johannesburg* festival in Nantes; in 2004, at the *Hauts de Garonne Festival*; then in 2013, at the *Carnaval des deux rives* in Bordeaux; finally, in 2013, at the *Festival d’automne* in Paris.²⁶ These bands had had previous opportunities to perform outside South Africa, but these trips to France increased their prestige (not without triggering some jealousy), and gave their youngest members the chance to travel outside their country for the first time. Meeting them outside Cape Town thanks to these invitations enabled further informal discussions, without necessarily adding to the investigations themselves. Above all, they further strengthened friendship ties, not only with the leaders, but also with several of the band members.

I had emphasised that I had no ties with the music market. However, being a member of the *Société française d’ethnomusicologie* (“French Society for Ethnomusicology”), I had access to recording equipment of reasonable quality. I thus offered to record Anwar Gambeno’s choir.²⁷ I made it clear that I could not promise anything, but that I would commit to take these recordings to specialized phonographic companies. He readily agreed. Thanks to Chris Ferndale, we were able to use Cape Town City Hall auditorium and we recorded 19 songs, 15 of which were selected for a CD released by Buda Records (The Tulips 2002). In July 2002, the CD won a *choc* award from the French music magazine *Le Monde de la musique*,²⁸ which unfortunately failed to boost sales.

This type of reciprocity is questionable: it can only benefit some of the interlocutors, and brings an almost commercial element in research relationships. Considering that

very fruitful, his son demanded payment when I sought to see him again to put together a life story. I refused, while offering potential compensation, a “gift” that would not be in cash, but this offer was rejected. Thus, unfortunately, I was not able to meet him again; with him disappeared vast knowledge of the social and cultural history of Cape Town, of which his son—no doubt convinced that I was going to earn a lot of money from my investigation, a suspicion not uncommon in this type of research—was unable to understand the significance.

26. See the videos : <https://doi.org/10.34847/nkl.ad346cxc>.

27. The repertoires of carnival troupes and male choirs had until then been recorded only on very mediocre cassettes, and these were unavailable outside Cape Town.

28. In each issue of *Le Monde de la musique*, the *chocs* highlighted highly recommended recordings; see *Le Monde de la musique* no. 267, July-August 2002: 98.

this reciprocity was established with my primary partners, that it never involved my own financial interest, that programmers or a record producer were the ones who made the final decisions and signed the contracts, that, beyond these choirs and this orchestra, I felt that I promoted unusual music ever hardly heard outside Cape Town, and finally, that neither Melvyn Matthews, nor Anwar Gambeno, nor anyone else ever demanded anything from me, I felt that my influence and intervention were acceptable.

In my mind, and probably in the minds of my partners, these interventions outside the actual field of research provided some reciprocation, which I felt was needed in work such as the one I carried out in Cape Town, and I do not think it altered the results. The only drawback was that, in the last years of my investigations, some leaders of *Klops* or of choirs resented having not been invited to France. This was the case for a few people who had helped, but not nearly as much as Melvyn Matthews and Anwar Gambeno.

South Africa's isolation, and especially that of communities considered inferior by apartheid, had prevented the spread of information regarding carnivals organized in other parts of the world. In addition to lectures in South African universities, I was asked twice to discuss the links between the Cape Town festivals and European or American carnivals. Thus, during in a seminar with carnival organizers and troupe leaders organised in 1994 by Chris Ferndale, I emphasised the universal nature of rites of renewal, which include carnivals, and showed videos illustrating that, in Europe in particular, behaviours during carnival could be far more unrestrained and "indecent" than they were in Cape Town.²⁹

I gave a similar presentation in 2009 at the District Six Museum³⁰ as part of a workshop on Carnivals in World Perspective for the *Kaapse Klopse Karnaval Assosiasie*. Finally, in 1996, I took part in work sessions with the Carnival Development Committee board and the new city councillors in charge of following this up. I also took part in a technical meeting setting out a new cultural policy for Cape Town city council. In 2009, I was asked to be an adviser for the "Klopse Carnival in Cape Town" exhibition organized by the Iziko public museums in Cape Town, then, in the 2000s, for the founding of a Musical Heritage Centre in the Solms-Delta winery in Franschoek.³¹ This was not "restitution" in its usual sense, but, retrospectively, I feel that these actions enabled me to present my research results with a more

29. A Victorian notion of "propriety" prompted some, including among the coloureds, to view attitudes in Coons' behaviour as grotesque (adopted to "please" white oppressors); in this respect, images of the Dunkirk carnival had an impact...

30. A museum dedicated to the history of this neighbourhood in which the majority of inhabitants were coloureds. It was declared a "white zone" and flattened between 1968 and 1982. See the District Six Museum website: <https://www.districtsix.co.za/> (accessed April 14, 2021) [archive].

31. This vineyard is notable for its policy encouraging employees' promotion, and for the presence of a museum and documentation centre dedicated to Cape Town music; see "Museums & Archeology," on the Solms-Delta website: <http://www.solms-delta.co.za/museums-archaeology/> [archive].

practical angle, which, ultimately, is more in accord with my interlocutors' interests than a mere report (delivered to several universities). I should also mention the few occasions when my primary partners asked me to come to meetings with town hall or province officials, less because of my presumed expertise than because the presence of a white European academic gave their requests more legitimacy in an environment still heavy with contempt and belittling for the coloureds, especially the working class. Initially, I was unaware of this, but I then accepted this role which, again, was about reciprocating the support that they gave me, without which I could not have achieved my work.

The last research involvement I must stress the importance of collaboration with students. My research was complemented by the investigations in Cape Town of two students, Armelle Gaulier and Lorraine Roubertie, from the University of Paris 8 (Gaulier 2007; 2009; Roubertie 2006; 2012). What is called "supervision" (in this case, co-supervision) of academic work is in fact a dialectical relationship during which knowledge and experience are exchanged, a relationship which most often turns out to be extremely fruitful for the supervisor. When the person with the title of "supervisor" and the students work in the same field, this interaction is even more valuable. To put it briefly, from my initial guidance—providing a list of contacts and suggesting lines of investigation—Armelle Gaulier and Lorraine Roubertie very quickly came up with their own research questions and developed their own fieldwork. Their work produced original and exciting analyses, as well as new contacts which I later found very useful. The collaboration with Armelle Gaulier, who trained as an ethnomusicologist, led to a jointly written book combining her research results influenced by her ethnomusicological viewpoint, with mine, presented from a more socio-anthropological angle. She compensated for my inability to achieve technical musical analyses, but also added significant input to the socio-anthropological analyses (Gaulier and Martin 2017).

Research outcomes

Publications

My research in Cape Town provided content for three books: *Coon Carnival, New Year in Cape Town, Past and Present*, Cape Town, David Philip, 1999³²; *Sounding the Cape, Music, Identity and Politics in South Africa*, Somerset West, African Minds, 2013; and (with Armelle Gaulier) *Cape Town Harmonies, Memory, Humor and Resilience*, Somerset West, African Minds, 2017. The first deals with the history of New Year festivities and offers a preliminary analysis from the viewpoints of creolization and the construction of coloured identities. The second provides a general overview of the various genres of music played in Cape Town, explores further the mechanisms of South African creolization, and attempts to refine the analysis of identity construction processes. The third addresses the male choir

32. Out of print; republishing with another editor is being discussed.

repertoires and relies on Armelle Gaulier's musical analyses to find elements that might help better understand their memory components and the role of humour in cases of collective resilience.

I decided to publish these three books in English and in South Africa, hoping that they could contribute to the debates on the history of South African cultures and thus on "identities," in particular on the role people categorised as "coloureds" played in this history, and the place they might hold in post-apartheid South Africa. I was also convinced that French-speaking readers interested in these issues could read them in English. When I was considering publishing an initial book on New Year festivities, Catherine Lauga-Glenn pointed me to Russel Martin, then head of David Philip editions, which had gained great reputation in the anti-apartheid struggle (Hacksley 2009). As for the second book, Anri Herbst, professor at the College of Music at UCT and editor-in-chief of the *Journal of the Musical Arts in Africa*, advised me to reconnect with François Van Schalkwyck, who had been a copy editor of *Coon Carnival*. He had indeed launched "African Minds," a publishing house holding a collection of academic works published under Creative Commons licenses, i.e., in a paid, printed version, but also as freely-accessible online PDF files which are sharable and reusable. Apart from the fact that African Minds publications are extremely well presented, enabling the greatest possible number of readers to access my work on Cape Town especially appealed to me.³³ Numerous articles and book chapters,³⁴ in French and in English, and, as mentioned above, a documentary and a CD, also contributed to the dissemination of my research results.

Archives

Once these various publications were out, my documents could still be used by others, for different kinds of research. Again, I thought that it would be best to entrust them to a South African institution. Once I had classified all my documents (prints, photos, audio and video recordings) and selected those that I felt could be made public, I decided to give them to DOMUS, the Documentation Centre for Music housed by the Music Department at the University of Stellenbosch. I chose DOMUS both because an important part of my investigations had been made possible thanks to research residencies at STIAS, which is linked to the University of Stellenbosch, and because I knew how well collections were managed in this centre, which has no equivalent in the other Cape Town universities.³⁵ Part of the documents collected

33. In fact, from 2015 to 2017, *Sounding the Cape* was downloaded more than 5,000 times on the publisher's site alone (it is also available on other sites), but of course this does not mean that all downloaded copies were read...

34. See list of publications in the "List of Sources" below.

35. The University of Stellenbosch, heir to a long history of ideological construction of apartheid and of education for National Party leaders, is one of those that have "transformed" (in the South African vocabulary) most quickly after 1994. In fact, as early as the 1980s, a group of theologians, including Professor Lategan, a future director of STIAS, had published a strong condemnation of apartheid ("The way for South Africa, and in particular for the Afrikaner

during more than twenty years of fieldwork research thus constituted an archive collection, which could be accessed on site but was not digitized, and hence not available online.³⁶ The remainder, which is still in my possession, consists of various materials: VHS tapes of shots used for the documentary, of some interviews, and of other events, including rehearsals of choirs and carnival troupes; film slides and digital photos taken by myself; scanned copies of the prints given to DOMUS; a disparate collection of audio or audio-visual recordings of the carnival and of the choir competitions (the latter, produced by the organizing committees of these events, are subject to property rights, so cannot be released publicly³⁷). Finally, I had collected a series of newspaper cuttings and extracts from books, and these were included in my *Chronicles of the Kaapse Klopse*.

Researchers, students, or professionals, in particular South Africans, wishing to continue the work undertaken by Armelle Gaulier, Lorraine Roubertie and myself, could be interested in these documents. The variety of their formats illustrate the technical changes which have transformed how information was collected: switching from audio recording to tapes, to MiniDVs, then to digital recordings; switching from VHS shooting to digital video; switching from film photography to digital photography; switching from photocopied print (or printed on paper from microfilm) to scanned and digitized text. Today, these changes raise problems of copying and access: these involve maintaining devices that can read these different media, or finding institutions that can transfer content from oldest media to those currently used, as they are the only ones likely to be put online. Because of property rights, some cannot be disseminated publicly, but might be accessed on request.³⁸ Most of these technical problems cannot be overcome by those who own these materials. Only institutions with the facilities to convert original documents and to file their digitized copies can solve those problems to eventually make them accessible online. It remains to be decided whether those documents generate enough interest to justify such an investment.

churches to come “home” to Africa can only be by unequivocal dissociation from apartheid and a concerted move away from it.” (Kinghorn, Lategan and Van Der Merwe 1989: 46). In 2018, while white students still accounted for 58.1% of the whole student population, black Africans accounted for 20.1%, coloureds for 18.1%, and “Asians” for 0.2%. English was the mother tongue for 47.8% of the student population, and it was Afrikaans (the language spoken by the majority of people categorised as coloured in the Western Cape) for 37.8%. Today, teaching there is done in English (predominantly), Afrikaans, and IsiXhosa. See “Statistical Profile: Overview 2018,” Stellenbosch University: <http://www.sun.ac.za/english/statistical-profile-2014-test> [archive]; “Language Policy of Stellenbosch University,” *ibid.*: <http://www.sun.ac.za/english/Documents/Language/Final%20June%20Language%20Policy%20November%202016.pdf> [archive]; “Documentation Centre for Music (DOMUS),” *ibid.*: <https://libguides.sun.ac.za/domus> [archive]; “Documentation Centre for Music (DOMUS): Collections and Finding aids,” *ibid.*: <https://libguides.sun.ac.za/c.php?g=742999&p=5316210> [archive] (accessed: April 14, 2021).

36. The list of documents filed in DOMUS is available in the appendix (MARTIN Denis-Constant Versameling file).

37. A selection of these documents is accessible: see “List of Sources.”

38. For a discussion of this issue, see Arom and Martin (2015, chap. 3)

Reflexions

This account attempted to summarize a long-term fieldwork research that produced a significant amount of material, by detailing the conditions in which it was collected. This research focuses on a long-neglected subject which is still often considered as lacking academic legitimacy. It seems to me that the study of New Year festivities and of Cape Town music reinforced the premise that citizens' attitudes towards power is complex, and it especially highlighted their affective component and the ambivalences that shape them (Martin 2002). It also confirmed the fluidity and variability of identity constructions, factors that fuel eternal debates among those claiming these "identities" or those assigned these "identities" (Martin 2010). The idea of "tradition" is an important element in these debates, and their reshaping, their constant reinvention, underpins the evolution of memories, and consequently the way in which they can be used in politics. Both the *Klopse* carnivals and the *Singkoore* competitions illustrate this significantly. In addition, my research helped to clarify a facet of Cape Town's cultural history that was little explored until then, and provided arguments to condemn the prejudices that have long fuelled the marginalisation and belittling of the coloureds and their cultural practices. David Coplan (2008) had already shown that these practices had in fact triggered creative dynamics that touched all South African cultures. The vibrancy of the New Year festivities and the musical energy of Cape Town provide further evidence of this phenomenon (Martin 2013; Roubertie 2012). Finally, I hope that my work provided a few additional facts that may help to eradicate the stereotype of coloureds as a population without history or culture, dependent on whites. This prejudice is still present and still weighs on politics in Cape Town, the Western Cape, and at a national level.³⁹

39. Marike De Klerk, the wife of (the future) President De Klerk, gave her own version, among many others, of this stereotype: "They [the coloureds] are a negative group. The definition of a coloured in the population register is someone who is not black, and is not white and is also not an Indian, in other words a no-person. They are the leftovers. They are the people that were left after the nations were sorted out." *The Sunday Tribune*, February 5, 1983, quoted in Adhikari (2005, 13). See also: Willemse (s.d.).

List of sources

The sources are available on this site: <https://cape-town-festivals.nakala.fr/>

Nakala Collection: <https://nakala.fr/collection/10.34847/nkl.df4au56x>



Site



Nakala Collection

Foreword. The documents and photos presented in this collection are just a part of the documentation collected during my research. Regarding the press articles and photos, I selected material that seemed to be the most representative, and which, in chronological order, might reflect the evolution of the New Year festivities in Cape Town and their social, or even political, meanings. I obviously have kept the rest of the documentation. Under the title *Chronicles of the Kaapse Klopse*, I selected extracts from texts (published in the press, or in books) relating to the history of the music genres and festivals in Cape Town (Document 1).

All the press clippings are accessible at the South African Library in Cape Town. You can find many more photos on the internet and in some books (in particular, the superb: John Edwin Mason, *One Love, Khoema Beat, Inside the Cape Town Carnival*, Cape Town, Struik Travel & Heritage, 2010). The printed materials are diverse and do not constitute coherent collections; here again, I selected those which seemed to be the most relevant for understanding the life of the actors in the New Year festivities (revellers, leaders of troupes and choirs, organizers of carnivals and competitions). Therefore, among these are documents internal to the organizing boards, the *klopse*, the Malay Choirs, and the Christmas Choirs, as well as documents recalling the importance of the MAPP (Music Action for People's Power) association in the cultural and musical struggle against apartheid. However, I have chosen not to include recordings or transcripts of interviews. These were collected with the interlocutors' oral consent; they had previously been informed of the purpose of my work and the framework in which it was carried out, but had not signed any authorization form. They were therefore based on the agreement that I would use their content for my research and its printed outcomes, but were never intended to be disseminated more widely. Significant extracts can be found in the three books that I have devoted to Cape Town festivals and music genres. All the recordings and transcripts of these interviews have been deposited with DOMUS where they can be read on site. This caution, which might seem excessive, is motivated by the fact that New Year festivities have long been the subject of disputes regarding the behaviour

of *klopse* members (especially since they were, at one time or another, called ‘coons’ or ‘minstrels’). People raised with class prejudices and a Victorian idea of decency have misinterpreted them, ignoring the universality of the rituals of renewal, of the costumes, and of the music and the languages of the body that are also found in other carnivals around the world. I have myself been criticized for treating them seriously.

1. Chronicles of the Kaapse Klopse followed by Themes in Klopse Names

1 PDF document (260 pages).

Identifier: <https://doi.org/10.34847/nkl.92efbl79>



[Download document](#)

2. Photographs

41 photographs (1972 to 2015). Author: Denis-Constant Martin, unless otherwise stated.

Identifier: <https://doi.org/10.34847/nkl.632arx0m>

List of photographs

01. My two primary partners, without whom I would not have been able to carry out my research in Cape Town: Anwar Gambeno (left) and Melvyn Matthews (right).
02. First meeting with Chris McGregor, Polegate (East Sussex), April 1972.
03. Program for *Woza Albert!* show, Market Theatre, Johannesburg, July 1st, 1981.
04. New Year's Eve 1993-1994, Malay Choir parade in Bo Kaap, one of the oldest neighbourhoods in Cape Town, formerly 'reserved' for Muslim coloureds.
05. *Klopse* parade through the city centre, Wale Street, January 3rd, 1994.
06. Troupes entering the grounds of the *klopse* carnival, Green Point Track, January 3rd, 1994: the Penny Pinchers All Stars, preceded by their drum majors.
07. The revellers' fun and feeling of freedom (*tariek*) during the Grand March Past (orderly parade), Green Point Stadium, January 3rd, 1994.
08. Each troupe displays a painted or sculpted board (subject to a best board competition): the Cape Town Entertainers wish spectators a Happy New Year, Green Point Track, January 3rd, 1994.
09. In the particular context of 1994 (a few months before the first elections by universal suffrage; pre-electoral period marred by violence) many troupes also carried the peace symbol, Green Point Track, January 3rd, 1994.
10. English comic song (English *moppie*) competition: the Cape Town Hawkers (mostly composed of hawkers), Green Point Track, January 8th, 1994.
- 11-12. President Nelson Mandela's visit to the *klopse* carnival, January 1st, 1996 (photos courtesy of Melvyn Matthews).

13. Festival of the Tulips-Cape Traditional Singers (names of the choir led by Anwar Gambeno), June 22nd, 2005; soloist: Johaar Kenny; young girls sing in the group but are not allowed to take part during competitions.
14. Rehearsal for a concert involving the Tulips-Cape Traditional Singers and Hlanganani, a marimba ensemble based in Langa, September 26th, 2007; then a rare, possibly unique, case of a Malay Choir and a black African orchestra sharing a stage.
- 15-16-17 The Tulips-Cape Traditional Singers at the *Hauts de Garonne* festival, Bordeaux, outdoors, and in the Mollat bookstore; July 3rd and 7th, 2004.
- 18-19-20. Street band parade, June 16th, 2005. The Western Cape Street Bands Association was created in 2005, in association with the Kaapse Klopse Karnaval Assosiasie to provide training for young musicians (instrumental technique, reading, ensemble practice), allowing them to subsequently join the orchestras playing with the *klopse* during the New Year carnival, and potentially participate in other musical activities.
21. *Langarm* evening (a dance meeting which is very popular among the coloureds, during which fashionable tunes are played, as well as *vastrap*, a dance which possibly dates back to the nineteenth century) organized for the benefit of the Kaapse Klopse Karnaval Assosiasie; November 7th, 2009.
22. Rehearsal of the Las Vegas Lentegour choir (name of a coloured township) in a school; November 8th, 2009.
23. Rehearsal of the Tulips-Cape Traditional Singers lead by Anwar Gambeno: Afrikaans *moppie*, 'Katrina Die Voorloeper' (the words that the singers must memorise are written on paper boards hanging on the wall of a large room adjoining the choirmaster's house); Mogamat Petersen, banjo; November 24th, 2009. See videos: <https://doi.org/10.34847/nkl.ad346cxc>
24. When the *klopse* choir rehearsals begin, a banner bearing the *klops* colours is stretched across the street beside the *klopskamer* (headquarters, rehearsal place) of the *klops*; Bishop Lavis (coloured township), October 23rd, 2011.
25. Rehearsal of the Carnival Boys *klops* choir, in the covered courtyard in front of the house of the troupe 'captain'; Lavender Hill, October 30th, 2011.
26. Rehearsal of the Fabulous Playboys *klops* choir; the paper boards are replaced by a slide show; Silvertown, October 30th, 2011.
27. Rehearsal of the Kenfac Entertainers *klops* led by young actor Waseef Piekaan (grey T-shirt, CD in his hand); Factreton, October 23rd, 2011.
28. Young singer from the Woodstock Starlites *klops*; Woodstock, October 23rd, 2011.
29. Rehearsal of the Woodstock Starlites *klops* choir; Woodstock, October 23rd, 2011.
30. Rehearsal of the Tulips-Cape Traditional Singers led by Anwar Gambeno, with string quartet, for the Combined Chorus competition (choir without soloist), in a large room adjoining the choirmaster's house; February 22nd, 2012.
- 31-32. Same as above, during a power outage.
33. The Cape Traditional Singers in Malay Choir costume, comic song (*moppie*) soloist: Johaar Kenny; *Festival d'automne à Paris*, April 28th, 2013. See videos: <https://doi.org/10.34847/nkl.ad346cxc>
34. The Cape Traditional Singers in *klops* costume, *Festival d'automne à Paris*, April 28th, 2013. See videos: <https://doi.org/10.34847/nkl.ad346cxc>
35. Young singer from the Cape Traditional Singers, *Festival d'automne à Paris*, April 28th, 2013. See videos: <https://doi.org/10.34847/nkl.ad346cxc>

36. The Fezeka Youth Choir (from Fezeka Secondary School in Gugulethu, black African township), led by Phume Tsewu, *Festival d'automne à Paris*, April 28th, 2013. See videos: <https://doi.org/10.34847/nkl.ad346cxc>
37. The Fezeka Youth Choir performing 'Stimela' (steam locomotive, train, in isiZulu), a song about the train journeys made by migrant workers from Mozambique, Malawi, Rhodesia, etc.; *Festival d'automne à Paris*, April 28th, 2013. See videos: <https://doi.org/10.34847/nkl.ad346cxc>
38. Advertising for the Cape Traditional Singers and iGugu Le Kapa (Fezeka Youth Choir) concerts at the Holland Festival, Amsterdam, June 17th, 2015.
- 39-40. Workshop led by Phume Tsewu and by iGugu Le Kapa singers with Dutch amateur singers, Holland Festival, Amsterdam, June 18th, 2015.
41. Riverside Roses, competition final for the Malay Choirs from the Keep the Dream Malay Choir Board, March 22nd, 2015.

3. Videos. Cape Traditional Singers & Fezeka Youth Choir, Traditional Music from The Cape

3 concert videos (2013). Author: Denis-Constant Martin.

Identifier: <https://doi.org/10.34847/nkl.ad346cxc>

Extracts of a concert filmed by Denis-Constant Martin at the *Scène nationale d'Orléans*, October 8th, 2013; reproduced with the kind permission of Mr Anwar Gambeno and the *Festival d'automne à Paris*: Joséphine Markowits and Bénédicte Dreher.

The Cape Traditional Singers

The Cape Traditional Singers were created by Anwar Gambeno to get the city's emblematic choral repertoires heard outside Cape Town. This group sings both carnival songs performed by the *klopse* (clubs) during the New Year festivities and Malay Choir songs, competitions for which come every year after those of the *klopse*. Two genres of songs are particularly typical of Cape Town. The *moppies*, comic songs in Afrikaans in which humorous lyrics are put on an assembly of melodic snatches borrowed from diverse repertoires; the soloist must express humour by underlining or completing the story with gestures. The *nederlandsliedjies* (little Dutch songs) belong specifically to the Malay Choirs; their tunes and lyrics are of Dutch origin but have been transformed by a style of interpretation in which a soloist must subtly embellish the melodies and "pass" them to the choir using very elaborate techniques—the result is a surprising contrast between the solo voice, which evokes the Arab world and the East, and the choir, which uses Western tonal harmony. Anwar Gambeno is singer and musical director for the Malay Choirs and the *Klopse*. Like most choirmasters, he can neither read nor write music, but he has fully mastered the art of composing melodies in his mind and harmonising polyphonies for three or four voices. He knows how to make the most of the singers that he helps to train, sometimes from a very young age, and how to attract high quality soloists, whether for *moppies* or *nederlandsliedjies*. Anwar Gambeno is also a man committed to his community: his choir is a haven for young people who thereby avoid being trapped in drugs and gangs; he is also involved in various charitable works. An amateur musician and music lover, he defends a view of singing which does not reject modernisation, but which aims to preserve the strongest features of what he calls "tradition."

Lead and ghoema drum: Anwar Gambeno.

Musicians: Ismail Adams, guitar; Frank Hendricks, guitar; Mogamat Adeeb Majiet, ghoema drum; Mogamat Petersen, banjo; Clive Samuel, bass guitar; Ridhwaan Trompeter, guitar and banjo.

Soloists: Jereme Trompeter, *moppie* soloist; Johaar Kenny, *moppie* soloist; Mustapha Adams, *nederlands* soloist.

Choir: Durrell Africa, Shaheed Alexander, Nicholas Arendolf, Jageja Davids, Morne Davids, Muneeb Gambeno, Peter Gambeno, Irufaan Kamaldien, Jonathan Lombard, Cheslyn Samuel Lombard, Mogamat Manuel, Mogamat Ismail Majiet, Melvyn Matthews, Raymond Solomons, Dassien Woodman.

The Fezeka Youth Choir

The choir created by Phumelele Tsewu is heir to a history dating back to the early nineteenth century. In 1824, envoys from the Glasgow Missionary Society founded a mission in Lovedale (now in the Eastern Cape). In 1841, they opened an institute there for young Africans of both sexes. Music and hymn singing were an integral part of the teaching. Very quickly, the students gave a special colour to the hymns that they performed: they mixed the four-part polyphony of European choirs with responsorial structures, built in staggered cycles and resting on intricate rhythmic patterns of African singing. This transformation of the European hymnody was formalised by composers trained at Lovedale and other institutions, such as the Ohlange Institute in Natal. John Knox Bokwe, Reuben Caluza, Enoch Sontonga, and Tiyo Soga composed Christian hymns, but also songs in which they spoke of the fate suffered by Africans. ‘Nkosi Sikelel’iAfrika’ by Enoch Sontonga is the best known example. After this first generation, other composers, such as Joshua Pulumo Mohapeloa, Michael Moerane, Mzilikazi Khumalo, and BPJ Tyamzashe kept on adding to the repertoire of African choirs, while in churches, new hymns open to the influences of African American gospel were emerging.

Phumelele Tsewu, an English teacher and former vice-principal at Fezeka Secondary School in Gugulethu (black African township in Cape Town), uses choral singing to compensate for deficiencies in music education. His passion, open-mindedness, and musical culture have enabled him to detect extraordinary voices among children from extremely poor families. Many were then able to study music. Generation after generation, he trains singers in extremely diverse repertoires: works by African composers, traditional melodies, songs in Afrikaans or *moppies* of Cape Town carnival. The choirs he leads have won many regional and national competitions thanks to their excellence and versatility.

Lead: Phume Tsewu

Soloists: Nokwanda Bovana, Zoleka Meke, Busiswa Ndlebe, Zolina Ngejane, Nokuthula Sidambe.

Choir: Phumeza Dlayedwa, Skunana Fezeka, Bathandwa Gubesa, Viwe Magopeni, Paul Malgas, Simphiwe Mayeki, Lubabalo Mbili, Monde Mdingi, Makaziswe Msuthu, Makaziwe Msuthu, Sibusiso Mxaka, Ntombelanga Ndlzaya, Sibulelo Ndlayo Ndlzaba, Sibulelo Ndlayo Ndlzaba, Nyekelo Ndlayo Ndlzaba, Nyekelo Ndlayo Juliet Sodayise, Zukiswa Tsewu.

List of videos

01. Roesa (Rosa)

Soloist: Mustapha Adams.

“Roesa” is undoubtedly the most popular *nederlandsliedjie* today, so much so that it has become the Malay Choir anthem. Originally performed in Muslim weddings, probably from the 1930s, this very simple love story proclaims probity and loyalty values that are essential for a community affected by slavery, racism, and forced displacement.

02. Katrina Die Voorloeper (Catherine, the drum major)

Soloist: Jereme Trompeter.

Like many comic songs, Katrina is about a *moffie* (a transvestite homosexual, with no pejorative connotation) who is the troupe’s drum major, the one who leads the way wearing an ornately decorated costume. Her father is angry with her, but her mother is very proud. At the end of the story, Katrina gets married (to a man), the dowry has been paid, but her troupe members wonder, “Who is going to be our drum major now?”

03. Meadowlands

Performed by the Cape Traditional Singers and the Fezeka Youth Choir.

The song was composed by Strike Vilakazi in 1956, when Sophiatown, Johannesburg’s most mixed neighbourhood, was declared a ‘white zone’, and inhabitants were driven out and transported to Meadowlands, a place around which Soweto would develop. This song, popularised by Dorothy Masuka, was astutely written. For those who were victims, the song was unequivocally a protest against the forced displacement, but the censors believed that it supported the government’s policy.

4. Music: The Tulips, Les Ménestrels du Cap

17 sound files (1999), original CD booklet (2002).

Identifier: <https://doi.org/10.34847/nkl.81d7ge71>

These recordings were made by Denis-Constant Martin on 30th May 1999, with equipment loaned by the *Société française d’ethnomusicologie*, in an auditorium at the Civic Center in Cape Town which could be accessed thanks to Mr Chris Ferndale’s help. They offer a sample of the various repertoires interpreted by the Malay Choirs and the *klopse*. The CD is now unavailable and will not be reissued. It is reproduced here with the kind permission of Messrs Anwar Gambeno, musical director of the Tulips-Cape Traditional Singers, and Gilles Fruchaux, director of the *Musique du monde* collection published by Buda Musique. Two “bonus” tracks that are not found on the CD have been added here; the soloist is Harun Kenny.

5. Examples of old books purchased from Clarke's

4 documents (1926-1967).

Identifier: <https://doi.org/10.34847/nkl.2bbarium>

Clarke's bookstore⁴⁰ sells new books, but it is mostly renowned for specialising in old books; it is a valuable resource for anyone interested in the history of Cape Town and South Africa. Below are some examples of books that I found there.

List of documents

1. PW Laidler, FSA (Scot), *The Annals of the Cape Stage*, Edinburgh, William Bryce, 1926.
2. William Papas & Aubrey Sussens, *Under the Table Cloth*, Papas Looks at the Peninsula*, Cape Town, Maskew Miller, 1952. [“Table cloth”, the name given to the cloud cover which regularly forms at the top of Table Mountain and which rolls down its slopes towards the city.]
3. Lawrence G. Green, *Grow Lovely, Growing Old, The Story of Cape Town's Three Centuries - The Streets, The Houses, The Characters, The Legends, Traditions and Folk-lore, The Laughter and the Tears*, Cape Town, Howard Timmins, 1957.
4. Bruce Franck, Denis Hatfield & George Manuel, *District Six*, Cape Town, Longmans, 1967.

6. Selected press clippings

52 documents (1862-1996).

Identifier: <https://doi.org/10.34847/nkl.27f1cqwe>

The press clippings selected and presented here are, for the most part, from the South African Library collections (SAL, national library) in Cape Town, except for those dated in 1994 which were collected during my stay in Cape Town. The oldest were taken from microfilms from the collections of publications, the others were gathered in thematic press files and were photocopied, all thanks to SAL librarians. The content of some of these clippings is reproduced in *Chronicles of the Kaapse Klopse*.

Cited publications

The Cape Chronicle was a newspaper briefly published in Cape Town during the second half of the nineteenth century.

The Argus or *Cape Argus* is one of Cape Town's oldest daily newspapers. It was launched in 1857 and, along with its weekend edition, *Week End Argus*, is still published.

The Cape Times is also a daily newspaper still published in Cape Town; it was launched in 1876.

The APO was the organ of the African People's Organization, the main coloured political movement created in 1902, which on several occasions organized a *klopse* carnival.

40. Clarke's Bookshop, 199 Long Street, Cape Town 8001, South Africa
Phone: +27 (0) 21 423 5739
books@clarkesbooks.co.za
<https://clarkesbooks.co.za/>

The Cape Standard was a weekly newspaper published from 1936 to 1947, which advertised itself as “The Non-Europeans’ *National Weekly*.”

The Sun, which was published from 1932 to 1956, was a daily newspaper intended for a coloured readership.

The Torch was the organ (often very controversial) of the Non-European Unity Movement (NEUM), an anti-apartheid movement mainly composed of coloured intellectuals, which was in favor of a systematic boycott of all institutions and actions of the apartheid government. It was banned in the 1960s.

The Cape Herald, launched in 1965, was a weekly newspaper targeting a coloured readership. Its first Editor-in-Chief was R.E. Van der Ross.

South was a magazine briefly published in the 1990s.

List of sources

01. Christy’s Minstrels concert advertisement, *Cape Chronicle*, August 15th, 1862.
02. Advertisement for the concert by the Jubilee Singers, an ensemble of African American singers conducted by Orpheus McAdoo, the first African American choir to perform spirituals in South Africa in addition to the usual repertoire of minstrel companies; some of its members remained in South Africa and probably played a role in the evolution of the New Year festivities’ aesthetic; *Argus*, June 26th, 1890.
03. Advertisement for the first carnival organized in a sport arena, January 1st, 1907.
04. Article about the preparations for the 1909 Carnival, *Cape Times*, December 19th, 1908.
05. Resumption of the Carnival in 1920 after a hiatus of several years that was due, among other things, to the First World War, *Cape Times*, January 3rd, 1920.
06. Article about the carnival organized by the African People’s Organization, *The APO*, January 31st, 1920.
07. Advertisement for the APO Carnival, *Cape Times*, January 1st, 1921.
08. Advertisement for the Newlands Carnival (rugby stadium) organized by the Cape Town Cricket Club, *Cape Times*, January 1st, 1921.
09. Article on the rivalry between carnival organizer boards, *The APO*, January 28th, 1922.
- 10-11. Article about the carnival, *Cape Times*, January 4th, 1927.
12. Photo of a *klops* choir, *Cape Times*, January 3rd, 1930.
13. Photo of two young *klops* members, *Cape Times*, January 3rd, 1930.
14. Article about the carnival, *Cape Times*, January 3rd, 1934.
15. Criticisms of the organization of the carnivals, *Cape Times*, January 2nd, 1936.
16. I.D. du Plessis (self-proclaimed expert in coloured culture and supporter of Afrikaans who, after the establishment of apartheid, became Commissioner for Coloured Affairs) offers his opinion on how to ‘improve’ the organization of the carnivals, *Cape Times*, January 6th, 1936.
17. I.D. du Plessis’ suggestions are deemed “ridiculous,” *Cape Standard*, January 10th, 1939.
18. Announcement of the merging of the carnival organizing boards because of the war, *Cape Standard*, December 12th, 1939.
19. Article about the first carnival organized during the war, *The Sun*, January 5th, 1940.
20. Criticism of the *Klops*, *Cape Standard*, January 9th, 1940.
21. Support for the *Klops*, *Cape Standard*, January 16th, 1940.

22. I.D. du Plessis' new proposal for reorganising the carnivals, *Cape Times*, November 8th, 1940.
23. Following I.D. du Plessis' proposals, the Malay Choir competitions are incorporated into the *klopse* carnival, *Cape Times*, December 31st, 1940.
24. The *klopse* participate in war effort, *The Sun*, January 9th, 1942.
25. A *klops* parading with patriotic emblems, *The Sun*, January 9th, 1942.
26. Advertisement for the first post-war carnival, *Cape Standard*, January 1st, 1945.
27. Introduction of comic songs in Afrikaans (Afrikaans *moppies*) in the *klopse* carnival, *Argus*, January 4th, 1949.
28. The controversy about the *klopse* continues, *Cape Times*, February 2nd, 1951.
29. Some *klopse* call for a boycott of the festival organized for the tercentenary of the arrival of Jan Van Riebeeck (first Cape Town commander) in 1652, *The Torch*, March 25th, 1952.
30. The *klopse* parade is banned in the city centre, *Cape Times*, January 4th, 7th, 8th, 9th, 1954.
31. The origin of *klopse* according to R.E. Van der Ross (academic and coloured politician), *Cape Times*, January 8th, 1955.
32. R.E. Van der Ross's opinion on *klopse*, *Cape Times*, January 29th, 1955.
33. Article about the carnival preparations, *Cape Times*, December 30th, 1961.
34. Criticism of the *klopse* (accused of collaborating with the Coloured Affairs Department) by NEUM, *The Torch*, January 17th, 1962.
35. Incidents during the carnival, *Cape Times*, January 6th, 1964.
36. Impact of Ramadan on the carnival, *Cape Times*, July 27th and November 20th, 1965.
37. Plea for the *klopse*, *Cape Herald*, December 31st, 1966.
38. The Group Areas Act (law establishing spatial segregation, adopted in 1950 and systematically implemented in the 1960s) disrupts the organization and conduct of the carnival, *Cape Times*, November 12th, 1968.
39. The carnival controversies continue, *Cape Times*, January 8th; *Argus*, January 26th, 1970 and December 17th, 1970.
40. Analysis of the carnival by Gerald Stone, psychotherapist, linguist, and *klopse* observer-participant, *Cape Times*, January 14th, 1970.
41. The *klopse* return to the city centre, *Cape Times*, January 5th-6th, 1973.
42. *Klopse* parades in the city centre are banned again under the 1956 Riotous Assemblies Act (1976 was the year of the Soweto uprising, followed by major anti-apartheid protests in Cape Town), *Argus*, December 23rd, 1976; *Cape Times*, December 25th, 1976.
43. An anti-riot squad is greeted with hostile shouting during the carnival, *Cape Herald*, January 4th, 1977.
44. Debates on whether carnivals should go ahead in times of intense struggle against apartheid and repression, *Sunday Times*, November 3rd, 1985.
45. The *klopse* are authorized to parade through the city centre again, *Cape Times*, January 4th, 1989.
46. Article about the first carnival held at the beginning of the end of apartheid, *Cape Times*, January 3rd, 1990.
47. Carnival before the elections, *Week End Argus*, January 1th-2nd, 1994.
48. Omnipresence of wishes for peace in 1994, *Week End Argus*, January 1th-2nd, 1994.
49. Successful *klopse* parade in 1994, *Cape Times*, January 4th, 1994.

50. The Beach Boys *klops* wears the ANC colours at the launch of the party's campaign before the 1994 elections, *Week End Argus*, January 29th-30th, 1994.
51. Allan Boesak (President of the ANC Western Cape branch) wears a *klops* costume, surrounded by members of the Beach Boys, during the presentation of the ANC manifesto for the 1994 elections, *South*, February 4th, 1994.
52. President Nelson Mandela receives a standing ovation during his visit to the 1996 carnival, *Argus*, January 2nd, 1996.

7. Musical Action for People's Progress, documents

3 documents (1988-1994).

Identifier: <https://doi.org/10.34847/nkl.2a7b36ok>

The Musical Action for People's Progress association was created in 1986 and was affiliated with the United Democratic Front (UDF), an organization bringing together many anti-apartheid movements which supported the ideas of the then-banned African National Congress (ANC). MAPP took part in political actions and organized cultural workshops with unions, community organizations, and youth groups; it opened a music school led by trumpeter and maths teacher Duke Ngcukana, and it also acted as an agent for musicians, notably jazz players. MAPP was supported until 1994 by The Network, the Swedish National Organisation for Non-Profit Associations. But following the first elections by universal suffrage, this support was stopped and MAPP could not get the necessary funds for its survival from local or national South African authorities. It was dissolved after a final festival, organized from February 2nd to 5th, 1994.

Documents given by Mr. Vincent Kolbe, except 03 and 04, acquired during the festival.

List of documents

01. MAPP Newsletter, June 1988; includes a paragraph on the *klopse*.
02. Brochure presenting and reviewing MAPP activities, 1991.
03. (recto) and 04. (verso) Program of the last MAPP festival, February 1994.

8. Cape Malay Choir Board (CMCB), documents

11 documents (1984-2015).

Identifier: <https://doi.org/10.34847/nkl.4caf9v81>

The Cape Malay Choir Board was founded in 1939 on the initiative of I.D. du Plessis (a self-proclaimed expert in coloured culture and supporter of Afrikaans who, after the establishment of apartheid, became Commissioner for Coloured Affairs) and of representatives of choirs performing traditional songs in Afrikaans (Malay Choirs), including members of the Dante family who have taken part in New Year festivities since the end of the nineteenth century. It organizes singing competitions in Afrikaans every year.

The documents reproduced here were given to me by the CMCB President, Mr Shafiek April, and by some choir directors, or were collected during competitions that I was able to attend.

List of documents

01. CMCB presentation page, March 1984.
02. CMCB 50th anniversary program brochure, 1989.
03. Program of competitions, 1990.
04. Program of competitions, 1992.
05. Program of competitions, 1994.
06. CMCB 65th anniversary program brochure, 2004.
07. Program of the final stages of the competition, 2007.
08. Program of the *nederlandsliedjies* competition (old songs transmitted orally, performed by a soloist and the choir, and characterized by the melismatic embellishments performed by the soloist), 2011.
09. Program of the final stages of the competition, 2011.
10. Program of the final stages of the competition, 2012.
11. Example of scoring sheet for the CMCB competitions: Young Men choir, *nederlands*, 2015 (picture taken at Mr Abduraghman “Maan” Morris’ home, President and musical director of the Young Men Sporting Club, April 21st, 2015).

9. Keep the Dream Malay Choir Board (KTDMCB), documents

2 documents (2013).

Identifier: <https://doi.org/10.34847/nkl.521704i5>

Founded in 2010, the Keep the Dream Malay Choir Board (KTDMCB) brings together choirs that have left the Cape Malay Choir Board (CMCB) to protest against its operation; KTDMCB competitions are, apart from a few details, organized in a similar fashion to that of CMCB. The documents reproduced below were given to me by Mr Anwar Gambeno who played an important role in the creation of the KTDMCB.

List of documents

01. Keep the Dream Malay Choir Board (KTDMCB): 2013 program of competitions.
02. Keep the Dream Malay Choir Board (KTDMCB): KTDMCB presentation brochure, 2013.

10. Tulips - Cape Traditional Singers, documents

4 documents (1981-2000s).

Identifier: <https://doi.org/10.34847/nkl.ae214859>.

The Tulips choir (which performs in concert as Cape Traditional Singers) was founded in 1981 by Messrs Anwar Gambeno (who is still the musical director) and Moegsien Davids (now deceased). This is the vocal group that I have worked most with, and the documents reproduced below were given to me by Mr Anwar Gambeno.

List of documents

01. History of the Tulips-CTS.
02. The Tulips constitution. 1981.
03. Poster of a concert in 1999.
04. Cape Traditional Singers presentation file, early 2000s.

11. Miscellaneous Documents

11 documents (1992-2015).

Identifier: <https://doi.org/10.34847/nkl.805bu26d>

Miscellaneous documents, listed in chronological order.

List of documents

01. Constitution of the Peninsula & District Xmas Bands Union, the main Christmas Choir organisation (these Christian brass bands are the third element of the New Year festivities, and their competitions are held after those of the *klopse* carnival and Malay Choirs), 1992. Given by M.R.C. Van Zitter, captain of The Royal Stars Christmas Band, January 26th, 1994, at his home, Paarl.
02. Suid-Afrikaanse Koorraad (South African Choir Council, SAKR) competition program, 1994, collected locally. The SAKR was founded in 1952 by choirs that had left the Cape Malay Choir Board because they refused to participate in the tercentenary celebrations of Jan van Riebeeck's arrival in Cape Town, event which started the colonisation of South Africa. It was still alive in 2019, though it seemed barely active.
03. Advice to the carnival organizers from the judges of the Coon Carnival Development Board carnival competitions, 1996. Given by Mr Melvin Matthews.
04. Mandela armband distributed during President Nelson Mandela's visit to the carnival in 1996. Given by Mr Melvyn Matthews.
05. Results sheet for the Afrikaans Combined Chorus competition from the carnival organized by the Coon Carnival Development Board in 1996. Given by Mr Melvyn Matthews.
06. Program of the carnival organized by the Cape Town Minstrel Association in 2000. Given by Mr Melvyn Matthews.
07. The Cape of Great Events brochure published in 2002 by Cape Town city council; after working hard to marginalise the carnival or to complicate its organisation, Cape Town city council is promoting it to turn it into a tourist attraction. Collected at Cape Town tourism office.
08. Under the auspices of ANC, the two main carnival organising boards signed an agreement in 2007 whereby they would co-organise the *klopse* road march in Cape Town city centre. This ANC leaflet, which claims a decisive role in this agreement, might be interpreted as an attempt to reach part of the coloured voters after the loss of Cape Town city council in the March 2006 election, and as a preparation for the 2009 general election. Given by Mr Melvyn Matthews.
09. Booklet describing the musical activities of the Solms-Delta wine estate (Franschoek): museum, documentation center, choir, brass band, etc. This estate stands out not only for the originality of its wines, but mostly for its policy of promoting employees and enhancing the local heritage (archaeological remains, oral culture, including music). Collected on site in 2009. See also: <http://www.solms-delta.co.za/museums-archaeology/> and <http://www.solms-delta.co.za/music-van-de-caab/> accessed February 2nd, 2021.
10. Rules of procedure for the Nokia All Stars *klops* in 2014-2015. Given by Mr Anwar Gambeno, captain of this *klops*.
11. Presentation brochure for the Jonge Studente choir, 2015. Given by Mr Ahmed Ismail, Jonge Studente President, April 22nd, 2015.

12. Denis-Constant Martin: Publications on Cape Town, the Coloureds, music genres, and parties (1995-2017)

2 documents.

Identifier: <https://doi.org/10.34847/nkl.72ebtxl8>.

Thematic bibliography of the author in French and English.

List of documents

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02. 'Denis-Constant Martin: Publications on Cape Town, the Colors, music and festivals (1995-2017)' (English version).

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