Looking Back to the Future: The South African Big Band Jazz Aesthetic

Curating the South African Jazz Songbook for Jazz Orchestra

by

Marcus Wyatt

WYTMAR001

A minor creative project submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Music.

Course Code: MUZ5057W

Faculty of Humanities

University of Cape Town

2023

Date of submission: April 2023

Supervisors: Amanda Tiffin and Mike Campbell

South African College of Music, University of Cape Town

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I'd like to thank my thesis/research supervisor Amanda Tiffin, for her guidance, patience and willingness to help one of her more 'mature' students through the sometimes complex academic and administrative process! Also to my composition/arrangement supervisor Mike Campbell, for his valuable and insightful input, and for his own incredible creative arranging ability, which continues to be a huge source of inspiration.

A heartfelt thank you the other South African arrangers/orchestrators who worked with me on this project – Afrika Mkhize, Melissa Van Der Spuy, Viwe Mkizwana, David Cousins and of course Mike Campbell: your work is exceptional and contributed immensely to the success of this ambitious project.

I would also like to thank Robert Soomer, and all of the people involved with the iconic Metropole Orkest – from all the incredible musicians, to the support crew on the tech side, and on the admin side. Special thanks go to Damiano Pascarelli for his invaluable assistance in the formatting of all the scores, and for all his help and suggestions with the arrangements and orchestrations.

I'd very much like to thank all the musicians I've met along my journey, who've helped to inspire and shape me into the musician I am today. They are too numerous to mention, but everything I have achieved is down to them. Lastly, to my amazing fiancé Romy Brauteseth – thank you for always supporting everything I do and for putting up with me so elegantly. To the rest of my family, thank you for starting me on this journey and for loving me throughout.

Abstract

This creative research project involved the curating of repertoire for a special performance in the Royal Albert Hall, of a South African Jazz Songbook, featuring the Metropole Orkest and selected soloists, and the resulting music preparation process for the concert. The objective of this project was to provide an overview of the story and sound of South African jazz to a mainly international audience. The primary challenge was to encapsulate the sound of a country that is comprised of numerous cultures and languages, all of which interact with jazz in a distinct and individualistic manner. This creative endeavour, in essence, was an attempt to address the question of what defines South African big band and orchestral jazz. Further focal questions were explored, specifically the questions of how South African jazz is distinguished from other approaches to jazz, and what characteristics South African jazz shares with global and American big band and orchestral styles of jazz.

The creative research process was conducted in several stages. The first stage involved curating the repertoire, with considerable attention paid to creating a programme that encompassed as wide a representation of South African jazz styles as possible, whist maintaining broad audience appeal. It was important for the project that the list of works selected would best capture the essence of South African jazz. Further consideration was given to which songs and artists have helped to establish the South African jazz sound both locally and on the global stage.

The next stage concerned the selection of appropriate soloists for the performance. Following this stage, was the music and score preparation. The process of arranging a South African jazz songbook for jazz orchestra involved careful consideration in terms of what comprises a distinct South African jazz sound in relation to the traditionally Western classical ensemble. It was crucial to determine the most effective approach to the writing and arranging of these works. This involved the identification of devices and tropes that define an African orchestral jazz sound. Further consideration was given to whether there would be a noticeable departure from this sound if the music were to be arranged or composed by someone unfamiliar with the intricacies of South African jazz, such as an arranger from a European or American background. The final stages of the project included the rehearsal process, and preparation for the final performance.

Through this creative research project, I aimed to gain insights into the factors that shape the development of the South African jazz sound, particularly when presented in large ensemble format, and how it continues to evolve and make its mark on the global stage.

The South African Big Band Jazz Aesthetic: Concert Recording Link

This written explication accompanies the audio recording of the project, and it is intended that it be read after listening to the performance.

To listen to the concert recording, click on the link below:

https://on.soundcloud.com/aDjqR

South African Songbook – Songlist / time stamps / soloists

Set 1:

1A. (0.00) Tete & Barbs in my Mind
(Dudu Pukwana) - arr/orch Marcus Wyatt, featuring Siyabonga Mthembu

1B. (2.54) Mra
(Christopher Columbus/Dudu Pukwana) – arr Chris McGregor/Marcus Wyatt / orch Marcus Wyatt
Solos: trombone – Robinson Khoury; piano - Hans Vroom

2. (8.47) Angel Nemali
(Dudu Pukwana) – arr/orch Marcus Wyatt
Solos: alto saxophone – Soweto Kinch; guitar - Peter Tiehuis; intro and outro trumpet solo - Rik Mol

3. (16.04) Bombella
(Abdullah Ibrahim) - arr/orch Mike Campbell
Solos: piano - Hans Vroom; tenor saxophone - Sjoerd Dijkhuizen; guitar - Peter Tiehuis

4. (21.50) Qongqothwane / Click Song
(Miriam Makeba) arr/orch Marcus Wyatt, featuring Eska – voice; Theon Cross – tuba

5. (26.57) Age of Inner Knowing
(Bheki Mseleku) - arr Afrika Mkhize / orch Viwe Mkizwana
Solos: piano - Hans Vroom; tenor saxophone- Leo Janssen

6. (38.53) Lakutshon'ilanga
(Mackay Davashe/Alan Salinga) – arr Louis Moholo/Marcus Wyatt / orch Marcus Wyatt, featuring Siyabonga Mthembu & Eska.

7. (46.08) Bantu
(Zim Ngqwana) - arr Marcus Wyatt / orch Mike Campbell
Solos: alto – Soweto Kinch; piano - Hans Vroom

Set 2:

8. (55.51) Connected
(Marcus Wyatt) - arr/orch Marcus Wyatt, featuring Eska.
Solos: piano - Hans Vroom; vocal – Eska

9. (64.02) Stimela
(Hugh Masekela) - arr/orch David Cousins, featuring Siyabonga Mthembu & Eska

10. (73.38) Yakal' InKomo
(Winston Mankunku) - arr Afrika Mkhize / orch Viwe Mkizwana
Solos: tenor saxophone – Soweto Kinch; drums – Toni Vitacolonna; trombone – Robinson Khoury; trumpet - Nico Schepers

11. (81.24) Diphororo
(Jonas Gwangwa) - arr Jonas Gwangwa/Marcus Wyatt / orch Melissa Van Der Spuy
Solos: Trombone - Robinson Khoury; vocals - Siyabonga Mthembu

12. (90.44) Anneke Tassou
(Marcus Wyatt) - arr Marcus Wyatt / orch Mike Campbell, featuring Siyabonga Mthembu & Eska.
Solo: Tuba - Theon Cross

Encore:

13. Dear Africa
(Mongezi Feza/Johnny Dyani) - arr/orch Marcus Wyatt
Solos: tuba – Theon Cross; alto saxophone - Soweto Kinch; voice – Eska; voice – Siyabonga Mthembu

Table of Contents

Introduction

This research project was initiated as a result of a commission from the British Broadcasting Commission (BBC) as part of their Proms concert series for 2022. It arose as a result of my prior collaboration with the Dutch Metropole Orkest Big Band. For this event, I was commissioned to curate a concert of South African Jazz, to be performed by the Metropole Orkest, with soloists, in the Royal Albert Hall, London. The instrumentation incorporated full orchestra with big band, and rhythm section, and the concert was to be billed as a South African Jazz Songbook.

South African jazz has gained international recognition, largely due to the contributions of iconic musicians who were forced into exile during the apartheid era (Allen & Coplan, 1996) . These musicians include Hugh Masekela, Miriam Makeba, Abdullah Ibrahim, Jonas Gwangwa, Dudu Pukwana, Johnny Dyani, Chris McGregor, Mongezi Feza, Louis Moholo, and Bheki Mseleku, who are widely regarded as some of the most prominent figures in South African Jazz (Ansell, 2005). Their music played a significant role in disseminating the South African jazz sound across the world. Among the many notable musicians who contributed to the global recognition of South African jazz, pianist and composer, Chris McGregor stands out as an influential figure in the arena of South African big band music. McGregor and his group, the Brotherhood of Breath, are still highly regarded in Europe and the United Kingdom. McGregor's exceptional talent as a composer and arranger embodied the quintessential elements of South African Jazz, and helped establish the genre as a significant stylistic contributor to the global jazz sound. (Shoemaker, 2023)

The format of a jazz orchestra or extended big band, in which the traditional instrumentation of the jazz big band is supplemented with the instruments of the Western orchestra, although not exclusive to South Africa, presents unique challenges in representing the diversity of the South African sound. In South Africa, jazz music performed by large ensembles is relatively uncommon, and big bands are rare. The divide between jazz and classical genres, particularly when it comes to collaborations between big bands and orchestras, remains pronounced. In South Africa, orchestras are still largely viewed as vehicles for European or Western classical music (Franke, 2012), although a growing "new music" scene has emerged that features a small percentage of original modern classical or new music written or commissioned for the country's limited number of orchestras (Blake, 2005).

Representing the diverse sonic landscape of South African jazz in a unified sound presented a significant challenge due to the country's rich cultural and linguistic diversity. Attempting to capture the essence of this diversity within a singular sound proved a daunting task, as it required a deep understanding and appreciation of the various musical styles and traditions that make up the South African jazz canon. It involved a careful curation of musical works that exemplify the unique characteristics and cultural influences of South African jazz, as well as a nuanced approach to arranging and orchestrating these works to create a cohesive sonic experience. The aim was to showcase the diversity of the music, while also highlighting its common threads and unifying elements, ultimately creating a sound that was both distinctively South African and universally accessible.

Inspiration

Despite its historical significance, the big band format has held a relatively small role in the musical landscape of South Africa. This trend was not unique to South Africa, as the 1960s saw a global decline in the popularity of large ensembles due to the recording industry and promoters realizing they could maximize profits by paying fewer musicians (Monson, 1996). As a result, small bands became more prevalent and have remained the norm in many cases. However, in the context of South African jazz, some of the country's most iconic musicians, such as the African Jazz Pioneers, Jonas Gwangwa, and Chris McGregor, have been closely associated with the big band format, either exclusively or in a significant capacity.

There has been a resurgence of interest in the South African big band idiom recent years, with a host of performances and recordings bringing this music to a global stage:

- Oupa Salamane's Jazz Foundation Big Band series, featuring Bob Mintzer, Pharaoh Sanders, Steve Turre, Ladysmith Black Mambazo and Bokani Dyer and other notable South African musicians. (2006 – 2023, venues around South Africa)
- Tutu Puoane's Mama Africa album recorded with Brussels Jazz Orchestra (2010, Belgium)
- Ike Phaahla's 'Living Legends' series, featuring the music of Feya Faku, Marcus Wyatt, Khaya Mahlangu and Andile Yenana (2014 – 2021, SABC, Market Theatre)

- Maria Schneider's performances at the Standard Bank National Jazz Festival in Makhanda, featuring several key South African musicians. (July 2014, Makhanda)
- James Morrison, Nils Landgren, Steve Turre and Tutu Puoane's big band performances Standard Bank National Jazz Festival, Makhanda, featuring several key South African musicians. (2014 – 2019, Makhanda)
- South African Songbook performed in New York by Wynton Marsalis' Jazz at Lincoln Centre Orchestra, featuring key South African soloists (2018, New York)
- Chris McGregor's Brotherhood of Breath recording collaboration between European and South African musicians (Cape Town 2019)
- The formation of the Lady Day Big Band (Cape Town International Jazz Festival 2019)
- Double big band performance featuring Wynton Marsalis' Jazz at Lincoln Centre Orchestra and Marcus Wyatt's ZAR Jazz Orchestra at the Standard Bank Joy of Jazz Festival (2019, Johannesburg)

Using the impetus of these examples as inspiration, and bearing in mind the historic lineage, this project attempts to expand the boundaries of South African extended big band music. Further, the project aims to generate new knowledge by interfacing with a more performance based and artistic-led approach to the research, and contribute to the written archive on South African big band music and composers with a textual component.

Focal Research Question

The principal focal research of this project was to curate and collate a collection of music that best represented the diverse South African jazz aesthetic, and present this in performance in an extended big band or symphonic jazz format. To achieve this, it was essential to consider the key conceptual and structural elements that define the South African jazz sound, how these elements could be used to develop South African extended big band/orchestral jazz practice. It was also important to consider how these elements differ from those used within a more American or European extended orchestral big band context. Further considerations included the techniques of orchestration, and how these could be used to best represent a South African jazz aesthetic. It was important to explore the aspects of the South African jazz sound, including harmonic, melodic and rhythmic characteristics, and comparing these with the traditional American or Western approach to big band arranging and orchestration for

symphonic jazz ensemble, to find methods that would highlight the signature sounds associated with South African jazz styles. The selection of soloists who would be able to complement and empathize with the South African sound, taking into account the restricted pool of available musicians for the performance was an additional factor that affected the curation process.

Rationale/Aims

The aim of this creative research project was to utilise the concept of a South African Jazz Songbook as a framework for artistic output and research. This project aimed to build on the momentum of recent developments in South African big band music on global stages, and revitalize the South African extended big band tradition, while respecting and observing the historic lineage. The objective was to push the boundaries of this musical form and to generate new insights by incorporating a performance-based and artistic approach to the research. The orchestration process and considerations in creating an orchestral sound within the broader context of South African jazz seeks to add to the catalogue of orchestral works arranged specifically for the extended jazz big band. In addition, this textual component aims to contribute to the written archive on South African big band music and composers.

Literature Review

The South African Jazz Aesthetic: Influences and Styles

The multifaceted nature of South African music is marked by diverse cultural influences, including a range of folk musics, each with its distinctive impact on and interaction with the American jazz styles that have been adopted over time. In the past six decades, the South African jazz scene has been shaped by a confluence of international sounds such as straight-ahead, bebop, modal, classic swing, and avant-garde jazz, pioneered by legendary artists like Charlie Parker, Miles Davis, John Coltrane, McCoy Tyner, Count Basie, and Albert Ayler (Merz, 2016) . The incorporation of elements from Motown, Gospel, and pop music, featuring artists like Aretha Franklin, Ray Charles, James Brown, Earth Wind & Fire, and Incognito, has further enriched the South African jazz landscape (Feld, 1988). In addition, the influence of great African and Pan-African artists like Fela Kuti (Eribo et al., 2008) and Bob Marley has also left an imprint on the South African jazz landscape (Onyebadi, 2017).

Going further back, the influence of choral and church music can be traced back to the many missionaries who arrived in South Africa (Knight, 2010). The European settlers who first arrived in the Cape brought with them Western classical music and other popular music styles from across Europe, while the Malay and Indian slave trades also brought a range of influences to the region. Street carnival culture, which found its spiritual home in jazz music in New Orleans, had been disseminated globally by groups of American ‘minstrels’ who also travelled to the Cape to perform. Additionally, scholars argue that the Minstrels and "coon carnival" culture may have been influenced by the Salvation Army, as well as the diverse cultural influences that were prevalent in the Cape Colony during that era. (Martin, 2013)

The musical amalgamation of these influences has resulted in several signature styles that have informed the development of jazz music in South Africa. The country's unique genres such as marabi, mbaqanga, kwela, ghoema and African jazz have become synonymous with the sound of South African jazz and continue to influence it both in the present and into the future.

Marabi was possibly the oldest of these styles, originating in the black ghettos of South Africa’s biggest cities around the 1920s. Marabi was distinguished by its repetitive, ostinato accompaniment, which typically followed the harmonic progression I-IV-I-V and served as a foundation for improvised melodies that could often continue indefinitely. These melodies

often comprised sections of popular songs from various sources, such as folk and religious music, American jazz, and dance music like vastrap. Electric organs and pianos were the primary instruments used to play marabi, while the percussive accompaniment sometimes even consisted of cans filled with stones. Marabi became a seminal genre in South African popular music, much like the blues was in American music (*Marabi – Basler Afrika Bibliographien*) .

Mbaqanga is often described as a more modern version of marabi, and originated in the shebeens of South Africa during the 1960s. . This unique South African jazz style also became known as 'Township Jive' (Ballantine, 1989). The melodies were also played on repetitive cyclical riffs similar to its predecessor. The mbaqanga sound is characterized by a fusion of Western instrumentation with traditional South African vocal styles (ibid.) and a distinctive, percussive style of bass playing which evolved further with modern versions of mbaqanga music (Johannes, 2010).

Kwela was also derived from marabi, but was mostly famously characterized by the sound of the pennywhistle. Kwela music originated in the South African townships during the apartheid era, where musicians played this portable and affordable 'flute'. The genre was shaped by a fusion of different musical traditions, including Malawian immigrant music and local South African sounds, as well as swing and jazz rhythms. The term 'kwela' means 'climb' in isiZulu, but the term was also used to describe local police vans that were colloquially called 'kwela-kwela'. Though not a rule, kwela tended to follow the simple I-IV-I-V chord progression, as was the case with marabi and mbaqanga (Allen, 1996).

Ghoema is a blend of various cultural and musical influences, representing the rich history of Cape Town and the Western Cape. The music itself is hard to define in one paragraph, but its roots lie in the fusion of its many diverse influences, primarily born out of the slave populace of the Cape Colony in the 19th and 20th century. Slaves from Malaysia, India and America (via Africa), minstrels and European settlers all mingled in this region, and the music reflected this diversity (Johannes, 2010). The ghoema drum is a portable percussion instrument that originated from slaves in the Cape during the early 1900s, and is made from a small wooden wine barrel with an animal skin stretched over one open end. The origins of the word are uncertain, but some have suggested that it may have come from the Swahili word for drum, "ngoma" (Martin, 2013). Ghoema is commonly associated with the relentless groove of the carnival street bands, with the sound of brass instruments, guitars and banjos,

multiple voices and beating drums. The style has been assimilated into the South African jazz repertoire of musical styles, and is now identified by a specific drum and bass groove, which has a distinctive, syncopated rhythm ((Johannes, 2010).

African Jazz versus American Jazz: Harmony

In order to properly contextualise some of these genres within South African jazz, it is important to also understand the generic sounding description ‘African jazz’, and where it might differ from American jazz, specifically in relation to it’s early swing origins. In general, individuals would tend to classify 'African Jazz' as marabi arranged for dance band instruments. Like marabi, African jazz was based on repetitive, cyclical two or four bar chord progressions (usually primary chords), as opposed to the longer and more complex chord progressions of American swing. According to legendary bandleader and saxophonist ‘Bra’ Ntemi Piliso, in his interview with Ballantine (1985, cited in Allen, 1993, p24):

> American swing uses longer and more complex chord progressions, and the chords themselves are more complex. African jazz does not use chords more complex than a triad or dominant seventh, and only three pitches are sounded at any one moment. Thus is the seventh of a chord is sounded, the tonic is customarily left out.

According to Ntemi Piliso, a composition could only be classified as 'African Jazz' if it features rhythmic influence from American swing, rather than simply being a Marabi arrangement. In addition, the South African sound, in those early days, also predominantly utilized major keys, while its American counterpart employed both major and minor keys (Allen, 1993).

African Jazz versus American Jazz: Rhythm

Something else worth mentioning here is the complex relationship between the swing and straight feel in South African jazz, and African music in general. It was once suggested to me anecdotally that perhaps the origins of American swing came from a simple ‘broken telephone’ scenario. On first hearing the complex 6/8-time rhythmic grooves in parts of West Africa, European researchers may have inadvertently put the emphasis on the wrong beat when ‘recalling’ the music to their peers back home. Where the polyrhythmic 6/8 over 4/4 rhythmic emphasis puts the downbeat on beats one and three (of the 4/4), they mistakenly ‘flipped’ the beat, putting the emphasis on beats two and four. Thus was swing born! While

this may not be true, it does speak to the close-knit relationship between African grooves, which are often layered, with polymetric time signatures or patterns that fit on top of one another.

The advent of ragtime music early in the twentieth century is said to be the first time the influence of this African polyrhythmic approach could be felt in western music (Kernfeld, 1995, cited in Thorpe, 2018). These early songs started developing three note melody groups, which gave the impression of 3/8-time over 4/4-time. Through the dissemination of this ever developing American jazz, converging with the more polyrhythmic approach of West African music, to my ear, South African jazz embraced both sounds. Though the polymetric approach is not as common in South African traditional music, there are some examples that contain some polymetric and polyrhythmic properties. I would argue, then, that this fairly easy ‘marriage’ between swing and straight in South African (and in a broader sense African) jazz, is a part of the polyrhythmic relationship that exists between 6/8 time (or in many cases 3/4 time) and 4/4 time.

The Large Ensemble in the South African Jazz Context

Large ensembles have played a crucial role in African and Southern African music, not only in the context of community and social interaction but also in the expression of cultural identity. These also include choirs, drum groups, dance troupes, and various brass bands or wind groups (often affiliated with the church), and have long been considered essential to African and Southern African music (Chikowero, 2015). These ensembles hold significance within the community and the broader society, serving as a crucial component of social interaction and cultural expression.

Big Bands are a good example of the large ensemble, and have played a significant role in South African music history, particularly during the apartheid era (Merz, 2016). These ensembles acted as meeting points for musicians to discuss current political issues, provide support to one another in times of need, exchange musical and non-musical ideas, and, of course, rehearse. As such, they served not only as musical groups, but also as important social and cultural institutions in the community (Coplan, David, 2008).

Since the 1930s, South African big bands had commonly emulated American swing, and some of the best examples of these bands were The Jazz Maniacs, The Merry Blackbirds and the Jazz Revelers. However, it was the Jazz Maniacs led by 'ZuluBoy' Cele, who, towards the

end of the decade, first started introducing marabi melodies into their own arrangements. During the 1950s, Bra Ntemi Piliso and his Alexandra All Star band were at the forefront of South Africa's jazz scene, fusing traditional kwela and marabi sounds with American big band music (Ballantine, 2012). This swinging sound was directly influenced by the American big bands, with the primary difference between the American big band sound and the South African sound situated in the harmony and the approach to the chord voicings. In traditional American big band jazz writing of this period (1930s – 1950s), it was typical for arrangers to incorporate four- or five-note chords, which included 7ths and 9ths (Nestico, 1993). In contrast, the South African sound relied more on three- or sometimes four-note chords, mostly triads with the occasional suspended chord, all in relation to the traditional I-IV-V type of progressions (Allen, 1993).

African influences in South African big band music

Chris McGregor was a South African pianist, composer and arranger who made full use of the complex polyrhythmic relationship evident in many African traditional musics. Many, of his big band compositions and arrangements contain examples of this. In a 1966 article for Drum magazine about jazz in exile, Lewis Nkosi pointed out that some elements of African music, such as polyrhythms and polymeter, could be identified in the compositions of South African artists like Chris McGregor:

> These are a constant repetition of themes, a harmonic tension based on the overlapping of solo and chorus lines which may lead to the singing of two melodic lines simultaneously, and a very complex metric organisation in which some beats are longer than others and accent is constantly being shifted, thus bringing about an element of frequent surprises for both players and dancers. For instance a song played in 4/4 time may suddenly seem to have shifted into 6/8 or 3/4. A number of South African jazz musicians are now going back to this African heritage for new ideas. (Nkosi, 1966).

In addition to McGregor's use of polymetric and polyrhythmic devices, he also managed to incorporate the many influences found in South African jazz into his big band writing. In his works, there are examples of all the afore mentioned South African jazz styles, as well as the influence of American and European jazz styles, both in traditional jazz format, and in a more free, or avant garde guise (Ansell, 2005). Chris McGregor remains one of the torchbearers of the South African big band jazz idiom. His early works, arranged for the

Castle Lager Big Band, were released on an album in 1963, which was recorded live at the Castle Lager Jazz Festival, held at the Moroka Jabavu Stadium in Soweto in 1962. It is possible to study his development as a South African big band writer through these early recordings, and then his later works recorded on several albums, by the Brotherhood of Breath while in exile in the UK (Washington, 2012).

Though McGregor wrote many big band compositions and arrangements, he did not write for a more traditional western jazz orchestra. It is interesting to note that this format likely first emerged in the early 20th century, at a time when jazz and classical music had started to look to one another for inspiration, and was pioneered by bandleaders Paul Whiteman, Fletcher Henderson and later Duke Ellington (Harrison, 2001). There have been several arrangers/composers who have written for the symphonic jazz format in South Africa, including Noel Stockton, John Davies, Victor Ntoni, Darryl Andrews and Mike Campbell. While the majority of music written for this format has been American or European jazz or pop, there has been a move towards a more Afrocentric and South African sound, particularly from Andrews and Campbell, through their work at the University of Cape Town's South African Music College. Both Andrews and Campbell have released big band recordings in recent years, both of which prominently feature South African sounds, and demonstrate each arranger's particular approach to representing the South African jazz aesthetic in a big band format. In particular, the influence of Campbell's approach to writing South African jazz styles for big band and extended big band has been significant in my own approach to this work.

Methodology

This creative research project aimed to create and present a curated performance of South African jazz music written especially for large ensemble. The project aimed to represent the South African jazz aesthetic in a novel format, historically reserved for western American and European music. There were several important elements that needed consideration in the process of preparing and presenting the concert.

This chapter examines the creative process in full, looking at it from two angles: the curation process, and the arranging and preparation of the music for the large ensemble format, maintaining a South African jazz aesthetic. I will examine in more detail the curation and musical considerations for the pieces I arranged and orchestrated myself, and will explore the curation process and provide a broader musical overview of the songs arranged or orchestrated by the other writers, including Afrika Mkhize, Mike Campbell, Melissa Van Der Spuy, Viwe Mkizwana, and David Cousins. Each of these writers was included for their uniquely South African approach to arranging and orchestration.

Curating The Concert, Selecting The Music

The brief from the BBC was broad, and did not dictate any specific detail in terms of the material. The request was simply that the concert should present a South African Songbook, performed by the full Metropole Orkest and guest soloists. The commission arose from a previous collaboration with the Metropole Orkest, in which I had joined the band on a small tour in 2020, performing a South African big band songbook, which included music by a wide variety of South African composers, spanning multiple generations.

Building on this prior collaboration, the BBC and the Metropole Orkest commissioned me to create a similar programme, but this time for extended big band, which would include orchestral instruments alongside the traditional big band format. The curation of the songbook program for the BBC concert was essentially up to me, and it was clear from the outset that it was important to include songs from some of our most influential jazz icons, both those who were globally recognized and those who were, for political reasons, less renowned. This was particularly important because such works were linked directly to the

decades-long struggle against apartheid, with some songs having been banned by the former regime, while others were composed in exile or under similar hardships.

Another crucial consideration in selecting the program was to offer the mostly English/European audience an overview of South African jazz in all its cultural and stylistic diversity. The aim was not only to honour the great South African works and the musicians who created them, but also to provide the audience with a taste of the various "flavours" that make up the unique jazz styles of South Africa. Additionally, it was important to strike a good balance between instrumental and vocal songs, while ensuring that the soloists were all comfortable with the songs on which they were featured.

The Soloists: Selecting The Appropriate Voices

One of the few conditions that the BBC imposed once the performance date had been settled, was that the concert should feature a few jazz artists from the UK, essentially to attract a substantial London audience. To fulfil this requirement, it was necessary to find appropriate soloists who would be comfortable performing the songbook repertoire, as the songs had, for the most part, already been discussed and confirmed by this stage. This meant booking British soloists who would firstly be able to relate to these iconic songs, and beyond that, would be able to immerse themselves within the sound and translate the essence of them to a predominantly British audience.

A further consideration dictating the booking the soloists was that there was limited budget available to bringing out more South African musicians and soloists. Ideally, for the best representation of this music, all the featured soloists would hail from South Africa, but unfortunately the budget didn't allow for that. Apart from vocalist Siyabonga Mthembu, it was planned that South African drummer, Marlon Witbooi and bassist, Romy Brauteseth, would join the band for the concert. This was because I felt that for an authentic representation of South African rhtyhms and grooves, the music would be best served with South African drummer and bassist. Unfortunately their visas were not issued in time, which led to the booking of two European substitutes two days before the first rehearsal started.

Soweto Kinch, a British saxophonist, was the first to be included in the Songbook performance as soloist. His sound has always resonated with many of the great alto players who have emerged from South Africa, and thus made him immediately compatible with the South African jazz sound and style. Furthermore, Kinch is highly regarded in South Africa

and has previously performed in the country several times in the last decade. His tone and technique closely align with the South African jazz sensibility, and he was deemed the ideal candidate to perform ‘Angel Nemali’, ‘Yakhal Inkomo’ and ‘Bantu’ with the authenticity and reverence they warrant.

I had first encountered the voice of Eska, the featured British vocalist, through her work on Matthew Herbert’s electronica big band album ‘There’s You and There’s Me’. Though I had never worked with her, her unique vocal timbre and musical sensibility made her a natural fit for the project. Eska was born to Zimbabwean parents in London, where she grew up, drawing inspiration from a variety of genres and artists. Despite her heritage, Eska’s lack of proficiency in southern African languages presented a challenge when tackling certain songs, most notably the complex clicking patterns in Qongqothwane (Click Song).

The third British soloist featured in the Songbook performance was Theon Cross, a talented young tuba player from London. His exceptional technical abilities and stamina on the instrument have helped bring the often-overlooked sound of the tuba back into the spotlight, particularly within jazz circles. What drew me to Cross was the resonance between the sound of the tuba and the brass band music of the Eastern Cape and the Western Cape's ghoema sound. He approaches the instrument like a bass player, and his brassy groove would serve to enhance those South African songs he featured on.

Siyabonga Mthembu, the only other South African present on stage for the concert, is a significant figure in the live music and performance space in South Africa. He boasts a diverse artistic background, having studied drama, and has been involved in music and music performance from a young age. Mthembu is best known as the frontman of the widely popular ensemble, 'The Brother Moves On', which is part of a new wave of South African music characterized by an Afrocentric, alternative fusion art aesthetic that incorporates multimedia and multiple disciplines in performance (Russonello, 2020). In addition, he is a regular collaborator with UK reedman, composer and bandleader Shabaka Hutchins, and performs in his *Ancestors* ensemble. Although he tends to operate on the fringes of the jazz scene, Mthembu is well positioned within the South African music community, and was an obvious choice to successfully narrate ‘our’ stories through song and spoken word. He is an extremely engaging performer, and his involvement in this project was invaluable. Without him it would not have been possible to do justice to some of these iconic songs, not to

mention giving the audience the authenticity of hearing them in the language in which they were written.

Mthembu's contribution to the programme included spoken word and slam poetry elements, which were carefully crafted to convey the underlying political messages in some of the struggle songs. The aim was to recreate the emotions and feelings that were present when the songs were originally written, as they were a means of resistance against a brutal system that denied black South Africans their basic human rights. Mthembu's delivery was insightful and thought provoking, interspersed with moments of humour when appropriate. His vocal performances were powerful and engaging, playing a critical role in bringing the South African Songbook to life on foreign soil.

As a member of the younger generation of South African musicians who are informed by black consciousness and African values, Mthembu was acutely aware of the irony in performing certain songs which were 'protests' against colonialism, in the heart of London, at one of the British Empire's most esteemed venues.

Arranging And Orchestrating The Music For Large Ensemble: Musical Considerations

One of the agreements in place, regarding the process of arranging and preparing the music for the Songbook performance, was to send the scores to one of the Metropole Orkest's (MO) regular arrangers. They would check the score and parts formatting and other musical devices, such as instrument doubling, voicing, ranges, articulation, and bowing. This was necessary to minimize possible delays during the rehearsal process. It should be noted here that the MO works to a very strict formatting protocol, for both the individual parts and the conductor's score.

I had assumed that the consultation with the MO's arranger would be limited to score and part formatting, and would not be too time consuming, but it soon became apparent that the MO arranger was reviewing the musical and arranging aspects of each score in great detail. Damiano Pascarelli is an Italian musician with extensive experience in arranging for orchestra, especially in the pop and jazz genres. It was evident that he had much to offer in many aspects of orchestral and big band writing, and that I would benefit greatly from his

advice, given that this would be only the second time I would be writing for a full jazz orchestra. Most of my arranging background is in big band music, and I did not have much experience writing for the additional full string section, orchestral percussion, harp and woodwind. While I appreciated the expertise and input from Pascarelli greatly, it became apparent that he did not understand specific musical devices pertaining to the South African sound, in terms of voicings, rhythms and melody. There ensued an intense period of back and forth between Pascarelli, the other arrangers and I. As I was curating and directing the show, I was also directly involved in going through the all of the scores, both my own works, and those of the other South African arrangers, and I monitored the feedback between them and the MO arranger.

This musical process forced me to confront basic questions around the South African jazz sound, especially considering that a large portion of South African jazz is played using Western, non-indigenous instruments.

The Songs

What follows in this section of this explication is a detailed description of the contextual considerations used when selecting each song, and the musical considerations, regarding arranging techniques, instrumentation and orchestration.

Tete & Barbs In My Mind

Composed by Dudu Pukwana
Arranged and orchestrated by Marcus Wyatt

Tete and Barbs in My Mind: Curation and Contextual Considerations

"Tete and Barbs in My Mind" was first released on saxophonist Dudu Pukwana's album *Diamond Express* in 1975. This song combined free playing with a hymn-like theme, and is a good example of the direction that many exiled South African musicians who relocated to the UK and Europe moved in. The music they played, though still melodic and grooving at heart, became more exploratory and free, eventually culminating in a more avant-garde approach. This approach was keenly taken on by musicians in both Europe and the UK. The Blue Notes, of which Pukwana was a member, have been credited in no small way with the advent of the British avant-garde jazz scene. (Carr, 1973) (In 1964 the Blue Notes left South Africa

to play at the Antibes Jazz Festival in France, and never went home.) Besides the importance of this group and the composer, the melodic and harmonic movement of this song can be seen as quintessentially South African, and the mood it creates makes for a powerful and moving introduction to a night of South African jazz.

Tete and Barbs in My Mind: Musical considerations

On the original recording, the theme is played by two horns, while the rhythm section is completely free beneath them, led by the exuberant drums of Louis Moholo. The melody itself is quite hymn-like, another good example of the influence of the church on a lot of Xhosa choral music. The church has long played an influential role on music in the Eastern Cape, (Pukwana's home region) particularly in the choral and brass music of that area.

The juxtaposition of this lyrical, anthemic melody and restless drums playing free alongside cascading harps and percussion made this a great choice as an opening statement for the Songbook performance. I tried to keep true to the spirit of the song, with voicings staying close to the triadic approach of more traditional South African harmony, with some added 6ths and a few 7ths on some of the denser chords.

During the back and forth of 'Tete & Barbs', a disagreement arose between Pascarelli and myself regarding the voicings and the issue of parts crossing. This was not an isolated incident and resurfaced on a few occasions throughout the process. A more detailed account of this can be found in the section discussing the composition "Dear Africa".

In homage to the Eastern Cape's great brass traditions, the arrangement opens with the brass only, and slowly develops to include the rest of the orchestra. Over this texture, Siyabonga Mthembu added his 'spoken word' to welcome the audience into the 'gathering', another nod to the spoken word and storytelling traditions also prevalent in a lot of indigenous SA music, as well as jazz (Coplan, David B. (David Bellin), 1994). When the piano enters, it is with the rolling, tremolo approach, which was something of a trademark of Abdullah Ibrahim (formerly known as Dollar Brand), one of South Africa's most renowned pianist/composers.

Between these three melody fragments, the drummer, percussionists and harpist freely explore the space, while the spoken text continues. This gradual build-up, with layering of more instruments is purposeful, in the sense that the song is the introduction to the Songbook performance, the orchestra and its different sections, and ultimately creates a window into the story of South African jazz.

The song stands alone, but is also seen as a fitting introduction to another of Pukwana's iconic compositions "Mra."

Mra

Composed By Dudu Pukwana And Christopher Colombus Ngcukana
Arranged & Orchestrated Marcus Wyatt

Mra: Curation and Contextual Considerations

"Mra" is a composition of somewhat disputed origins: there are two very similar versions, one by Dudu Pukwana, and the other (better known in Cape Town) by Christopher Columbus 'Mra' Ngcukana. The truth of the song's actual origins is unknown, a common occurrence in jazz and popular music, particularly in South Africa, where historically many of these compositions were seldom notated. Rather they were passed along aurally, with reinterpretations becoming commonplace in different regions (Davidson, 2012) .

Pukwana's version was made popular by Chris McGregor's Brotherhood of Breath, and McGregor's arrangement of this song encompassed the high energy and relentless groove for which many South African jazz pieces have become globally renowned. Columbus' Cape version of the song was a more heavily swinging melody, usually played over a Mbaqanga-styled groove. Both versions are good examples of the less common, but equally popular two-chord harmonic form – usually a major second apart, alternating between chord I and the bVII, or chord I and chord II (here, common practice jazz functional harmony nomenclature refers).

This arrangement celebrates both known versions of the song, and the first part is also in homage to the great South African pianist/composer, (and founding member of The Blue Notes) Chris McGregor. McGregor's big band arrangement of Pukwana's "Mra" is as iconic as the song, and became notorious through its release on his Brotherhood of Breath's debut (self titled) 1971 album. In his column on Chris McGregor's big band work, Bill Shoemaker (2023) describes the recording of "Mra":

> The piece has an all-caps intensity that immediately distinguishes it from boilerplate kwela, as riveting rhythmic figures are layered by bass, piano, and trombones, the

see-sawing harmonic movement between chords a major second apart buttressed by saxophone voicings (Shoemaker, 2023).

Ngcukana's version was similar, but with slight differences in the melody, and featured a more 'swing' approach originally. It later was rearranged by Caiphus Semenya, and played more as a 'straight' feel, with an mbaqanga style on Hugh Masekela's album, *Hugh Masekela Is Alive and Well at the Whiskey* (Masekela, 1967).

Both versions are good examples of the typical call-and-response practice, which is popular in South African jazz, as well as in African music in general (Nketia, 1974).

In addition to the historical relevance of the song, its high tempo, frenetic energy (with short, intense solos from trombone and piano), made this an engaging and exciting opening feature for the songbook, particularly if one looks at "Tete and Barbs" as a prelude.

Mra: Musical considerations

This arrangement starts with a nod to McGregor and his version, simulating the call-and-response phrases between horns, while the low strings and the rhythm section drive the piece forward. The melody is sounded in a fanfare by trumpets, with trombones and saxophones taking over on the repeat. It then moves from a brief trombone solo into the Ngcukana version, which is phrased with a heavy triplet swing feel.

One issue I encountered at this point was in Pascarelli's approach to reharmonisation of the saxophone soli, which sounds the main melody. I had originally used a five-part voicing with the first alto saxophone on the lead, and the baritone saxophone doubling the lead an octave down. Because the harmony of the piece is predominantly triadic it was not always possible to find three other appropriate chord tones for the remaining three saxophones in the section. This is something I have often encountered when arranging more traditional tonic - subdominant - dominant (I-IV-V) type South African pieces for large ensembles. As a solution, I will often give one or two horns a line that repeats a few notes sequentially, rather than doubling or tripling other harmony notes. In my experience, the overall effect of this approach often 'feels' more swinging, or grooving and tends to drive the momentum of the melody, and ultimately the groove.

The traditional approach to five-note harmonisations in common practice jazz arranging is to avoid multiple repeated notes in the inner voices of a passage (Sussman & Abene, 2012) .

Using this approach, with the movement of all parts linear, without repeated notes (as per Pascarelli's suggestion), while the music still swings, the rhythmic feel can often sound slightly 'overswung' and less grounded. When a player plays a 'melody' of the same note repeated, the effect is more percussive which in itself often serves to enhance the groove aspect of the music..

My original harmonisation of the saxophone soli in bars 81 – 87 is shown in Figure 1A below. Pascarelli's reharmonization is shown in Figure 1B. The repeated notes in question occur in the second tenor saxophone.

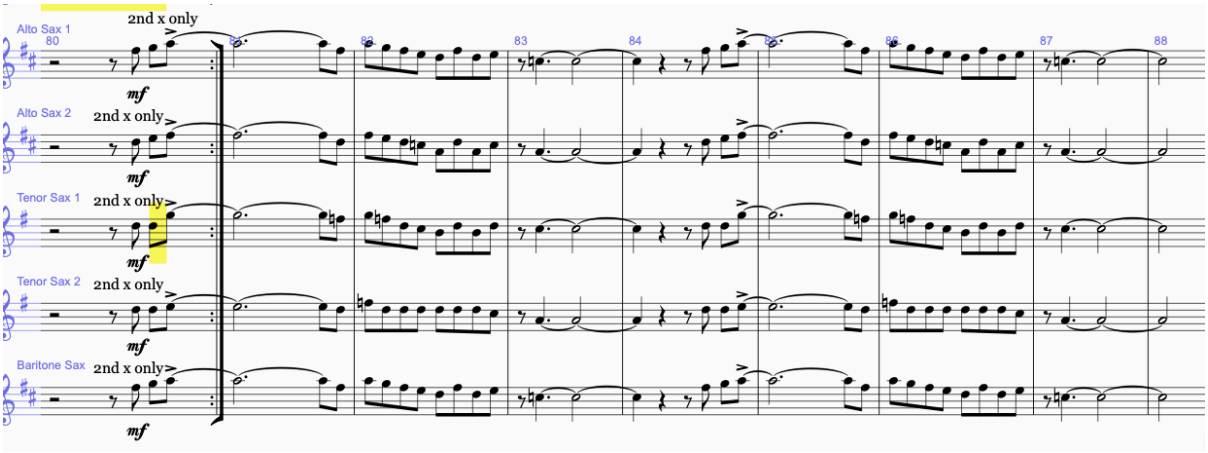


Figure 1A MRA Saxophone Soli: Original Harmonisation

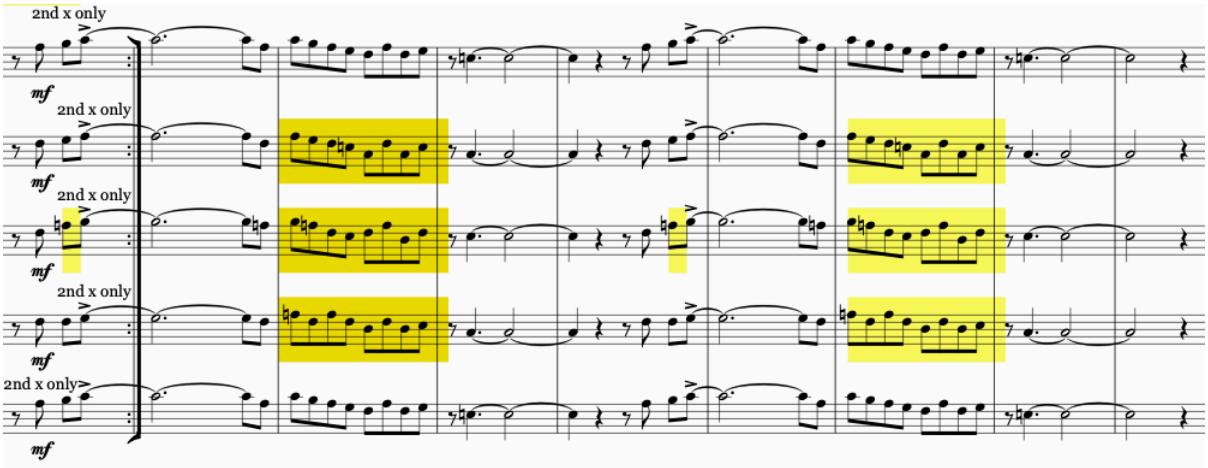


Figure 1B MRA Saxophone Soli: Pascarelli's Reharmonisation

Another example of the differing stylistic choices between a European approach and a South African approach occurs in Bar 13: Pascarelli wanted to add Marimba, to double the low driving string line, and to me that felt a little out of character. Marimba, though being integral

to some indigenous Southern African music, is not really part of the South African jazz soundscape. It is more often associated with a broader 'African' continental sound, and hardly ever with jazz, unlike it's relative the vibraphone. It could be argued that Western musicians often tend to associate the entire African continent with one sound. Regarding this, Wachsmann and Cooke, (1965, cited in Agawu 2003:31) commented that:

> It is customary in the Western world for people to use the term "African Music" as if it were a single clearly identifiable phenomenon. Yet when one considers the size of the continent… one should not be surprised at the diversity of music and the difficulty of isolating distinctly African features common to the whole continent.(Agawu, 2003)

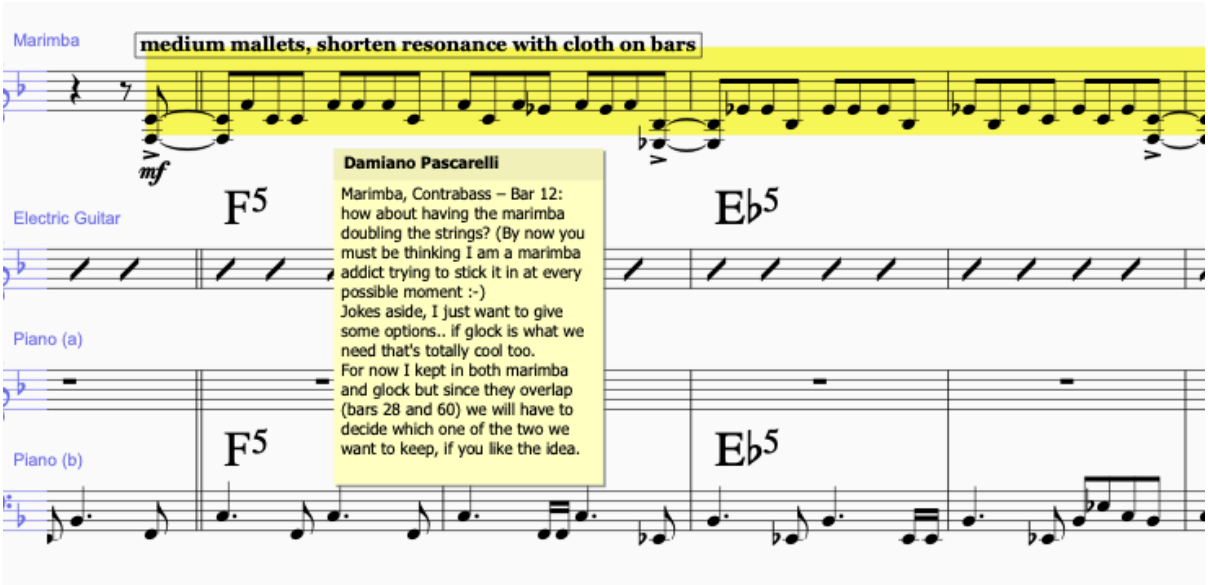


Figure 2 Mra: Suggested use of marimba

The overarching concept for this arrangement was to pay homage to the different versions of the song, and to highlight in particular, McGregor's approach to arranging. As the opening piece (after the introduction), this song was always intended to be a real 'barnstormer' of a chart. The challenge here was how to integrate the strings and woodwinds, whilst retaining the brassy 'big band' feel. Keeping the strings in a low register, played in a more percussive staccato manner (still bowed) gave them a hornlike effect, which served to enhance the groove.

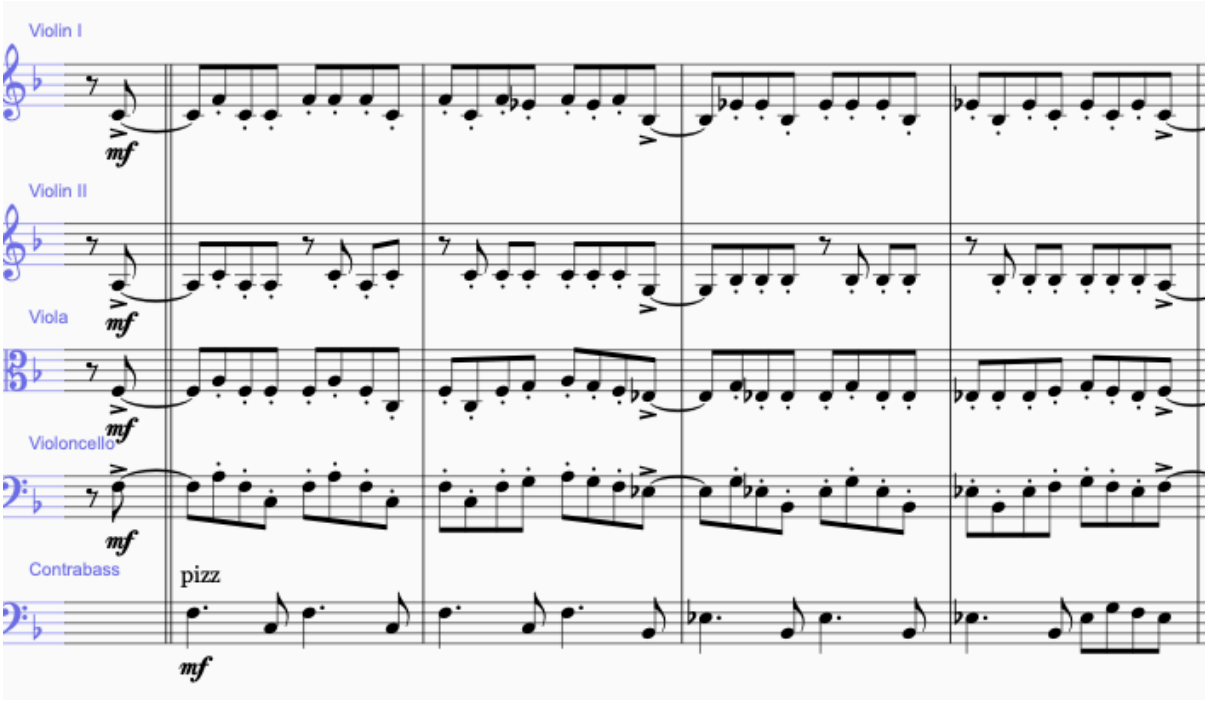


Figure 3 Mra: Percussive string figures

It was important to have the main melody (played by the trumpets, echoing McGregor's arrangement) sounded clearly, without too many other elements detracting from it. At some point Pascarelli suggested doubling the low string line with the woodwinds up two octaves, but I felt that this would have detracted from the main focus of the melody. The figure below show's Pascarelli's added woodwind melody, in bars 28-32:

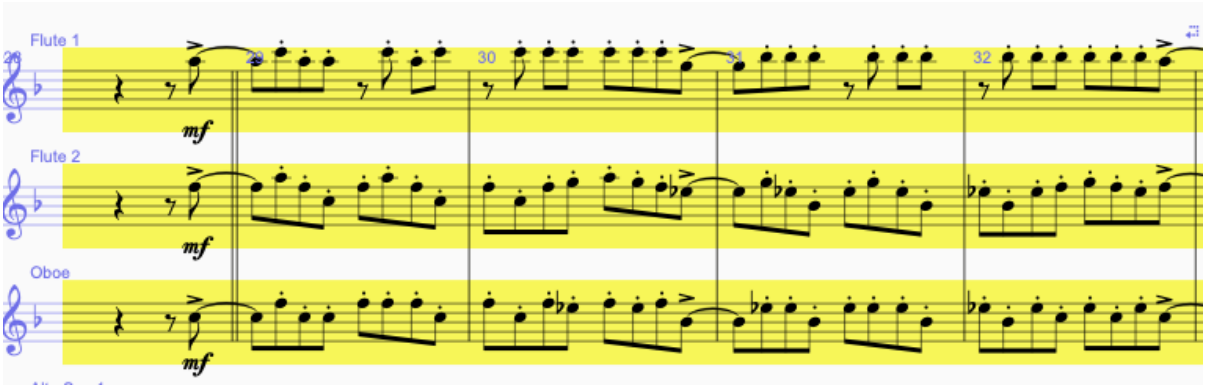


Figure 4 Mra: Pascarelli's suggested woodwind figures

Angel Nemali

Composed by Dudu Pukwana
*A*rranged *and* orchestrated Marcus Wyatt

Angel Nemali: Curation and Contextual considerations

The genesis of Angel Nemali (alternatively spelled Angel Nomali) is a matter of contention. Authorship of this song is most often attributed to Dudu Puwkana, however, anecdotally, some musicians most notably Adam Glasser, assert that the composer is in fact Caiphus Semenya. Regardless of its origin, the song was popularized on Pukwana's 1973 album 'In the Townships' and has since become an iconic piece covered by numerous artists. It exemplifies many of the typical traits of South African jazz: the I-IV-V harmony, melody, and the 'triplet' approach to swing, so embraced in the country. Given the scarcity of other swing pieces in the set, it was a natural choice for inclusion.

Angel Nemali: Musical considerations

Originally, the composition was a platform for Dudu Pukwana's lively, powerful, and somewhat acerbic alto tone. There is a great tradition of both tenor and alto saxophone players in South Africa, and they have all contributed in no small way to this country's place in the global jazz pantheon (Merz, 2016). In particular, many South African alto saxophonists have tended to favour a slightly boisterous, sometimes brash but characterful approach. Some of the best examples of this sound would be Gwigwi Mrwebi, Kippie Moeketsi, Bra Ntemi Piliso, Dudu Pukwana, Barney Rachabane, Morris Goldberg and Zim Ngqawana.

Given that this was originally an alto saxophone feature, it seemed appropriate to harmonize the main theme of 'Angel' for the entire saxophone section. This approach has been a favoured technique in South African jazz, and was popularized by Bra Ntemi Piliso's African Jazz Pioneers, who achieved global recognition and helped to disseminate this sound worldwide (Merz, 2016).

Angel Nemali fits firmly into the stock South African I-IV-V form, and thus I voiced the saxophones in this manner, with the lead melody played by the first alto saxophone, and then doubled an octave below in the baritone saxophone. Between these voices, the other three saxophones fill out the rest of the chords, primarily making use of the root, 3rd, 5th, 6th and occasionally the 7th (much less frequently). This is approach is illustrated in the voicing for the first note of the melody (see the figure below), with the use of root, 3rd, 5th and 6th.

Similar to the approach used for the saxophone voicings in “Mra”, the second tenor saxophone 2 has a part with a fair amount of repetition, often playing the 6th on chord I, and occasionally the 7th (in chord V). The overall effect maintains the sound of five voices moving together, and though these parts are not always linear to play, they contribute immensely to the rhythmic richness and the swing feel.

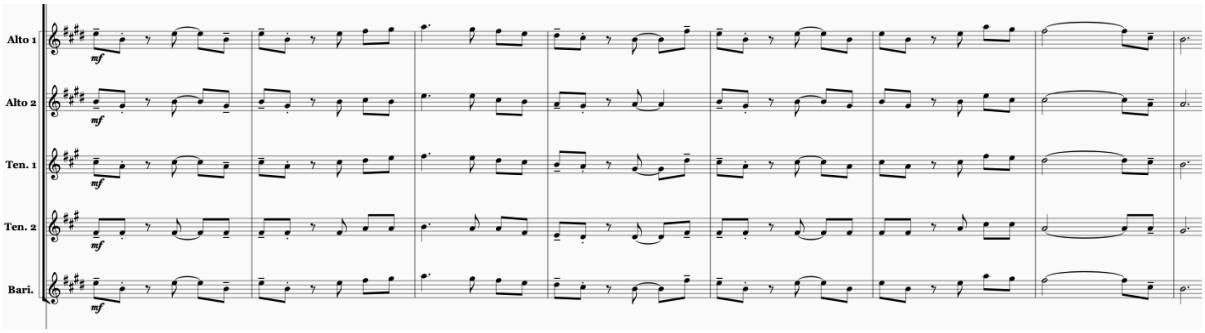


Figure 5 Angel Nemali saxophone melody

Another feature of this chart is the relationship between the ‘swing’ and ‘straight’ approach to phrasing, and in fact how they can often work simultaneously. This is a common characteristic of many South African jazz styles, mentioned previously in the Literature Review chapter. At the beginning of the chart, the majority of the ensemble plays a straight rhythmic feel, while the trumpet is free to improvise over this, often swinging in its phrasing.

See next page 24, Figure 6, Angel Nemali: Introduction

The transition of the group from straight to swing as the melody begins (bar 33) feels natural, and also serves to highlight the close relationship between straight and swing in SA jazz.

Another example of this relationship between straight and swing in South African jazz is the phrasing of the woodwinds from bar 180: they play straight for 8 bars or so, while the rest of the group is swinging.

See page 25 for Figure 7 Angel Nemali: Bar 180

Conductor's Score
Exp. duration: 5'47"

Angel Nemali

Dudu Pukwana
Arranged for the Metropole Orkest
by Marcus Wyatt

♩ = 125
Straight

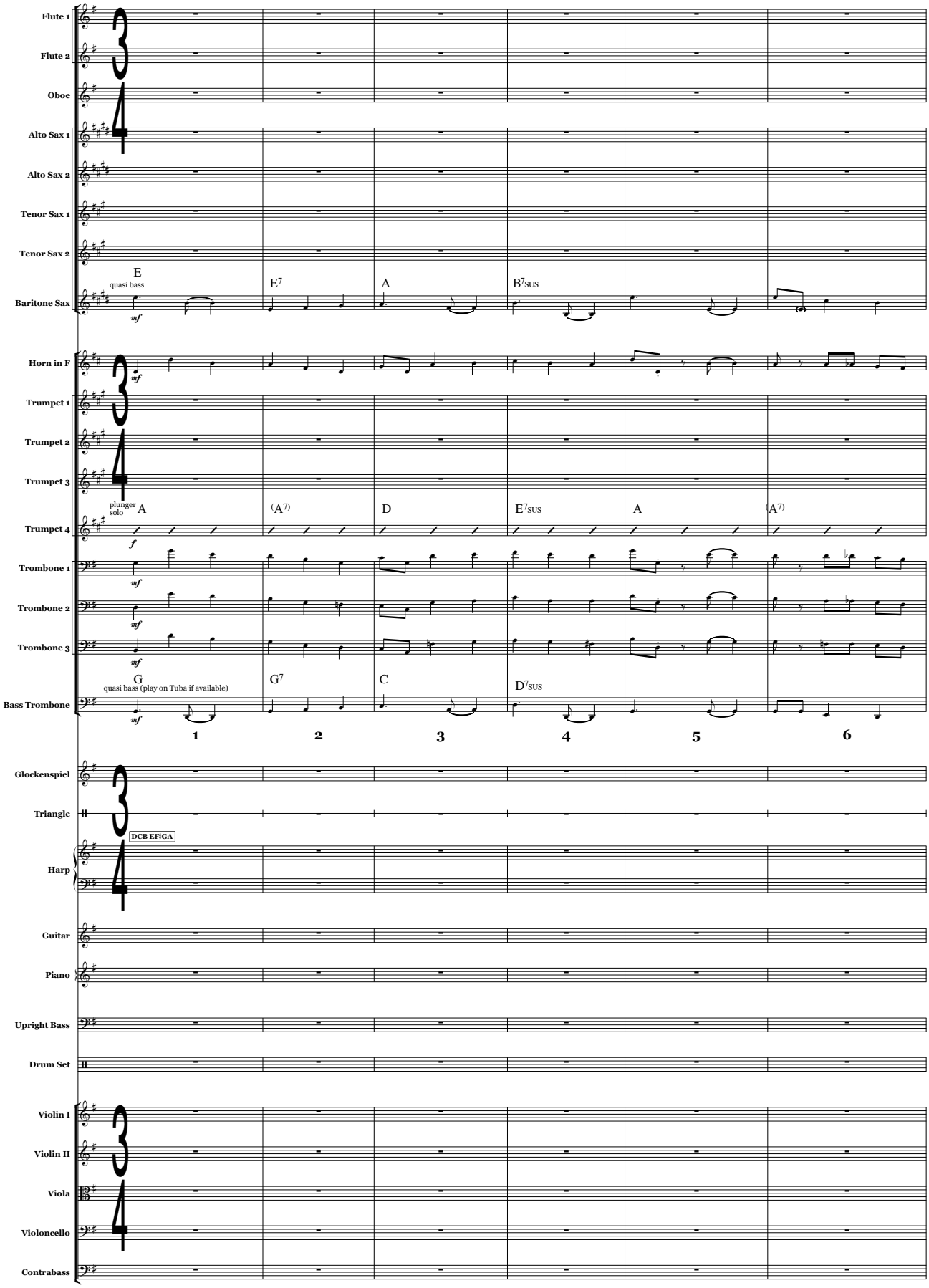


Figure 6: Angel Nemali

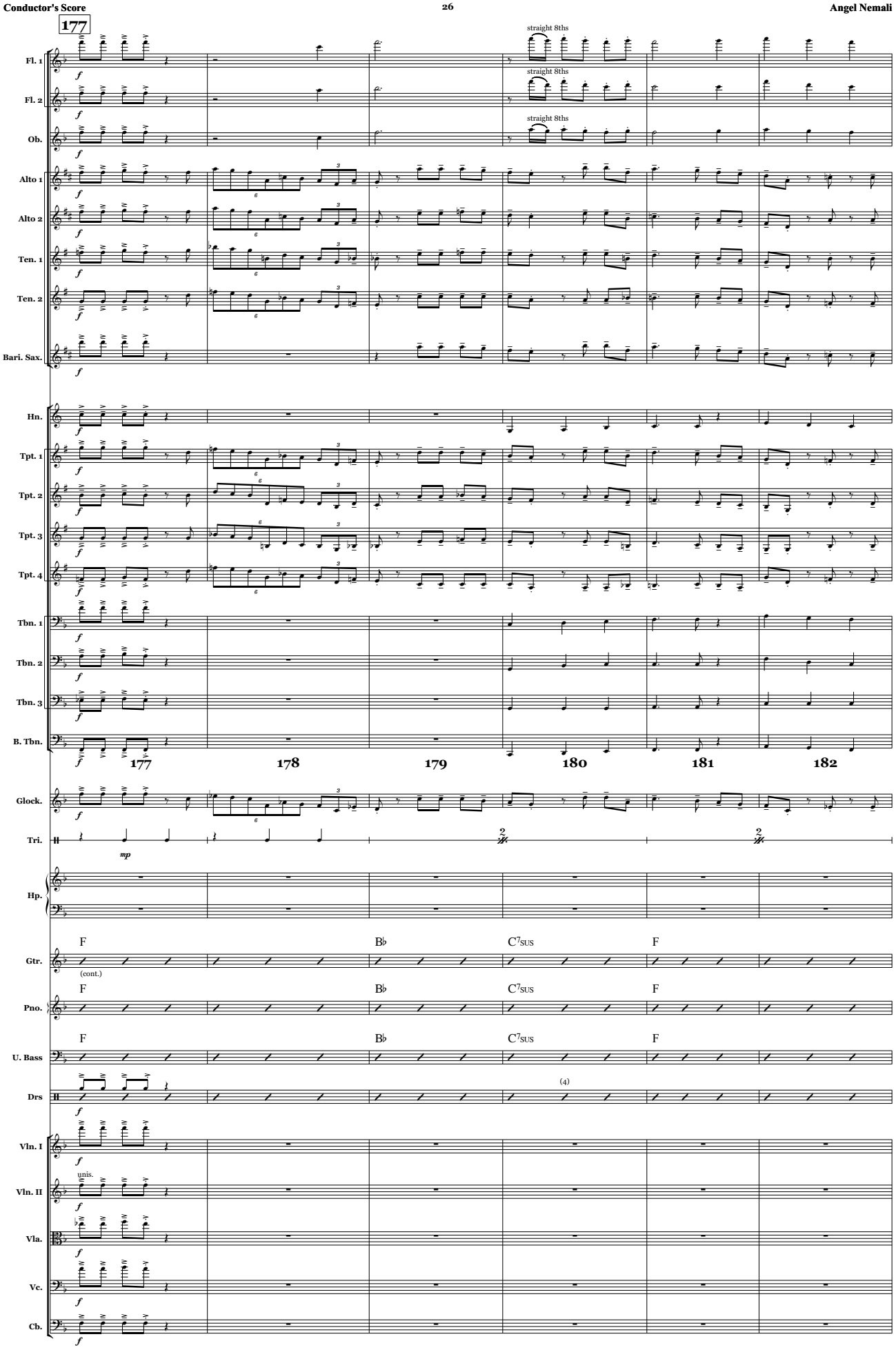


Figure 7 Angel Nemali: Bars 172 - 189

In addition to the effectiveness of this rhythmic juxtaposition, it was always part of the plan to try to avoid having the primarily orchestral instruments (specifically strings, woodwinds and harp) engage with swing phrasing where possible. Swing phrasing is not something that most Western classical players are very comfortable with, and its use for these instruments can sometimes detract from the overall rhythmic feel of the songs.

To this same end, one of the key pieces of advice that my arrangement/orchestration supervisor gave me was to try to write to the strengths of the particular instruments or sections, and not to take them too far out of their 'comfort zone'. With this also in mind, I wrote with a fairly minimalist approach to the more orchestral instruments in this particular song. Some of the reasons include the fact that this is a 'swinging' song, and lends itself more to a big band sound. Another was a wish to remain true to the simple nature of the original recording of Pukwana, to allow the audience to engage with the essence of one of the best examples of traditional South African jazz.

One further illustration of a European versus a South African approach to the writing was the presence of a minor second clash between a B-flat and a B natural in the horn section, which Pascarelli questioned.

See Figure 8, next page:

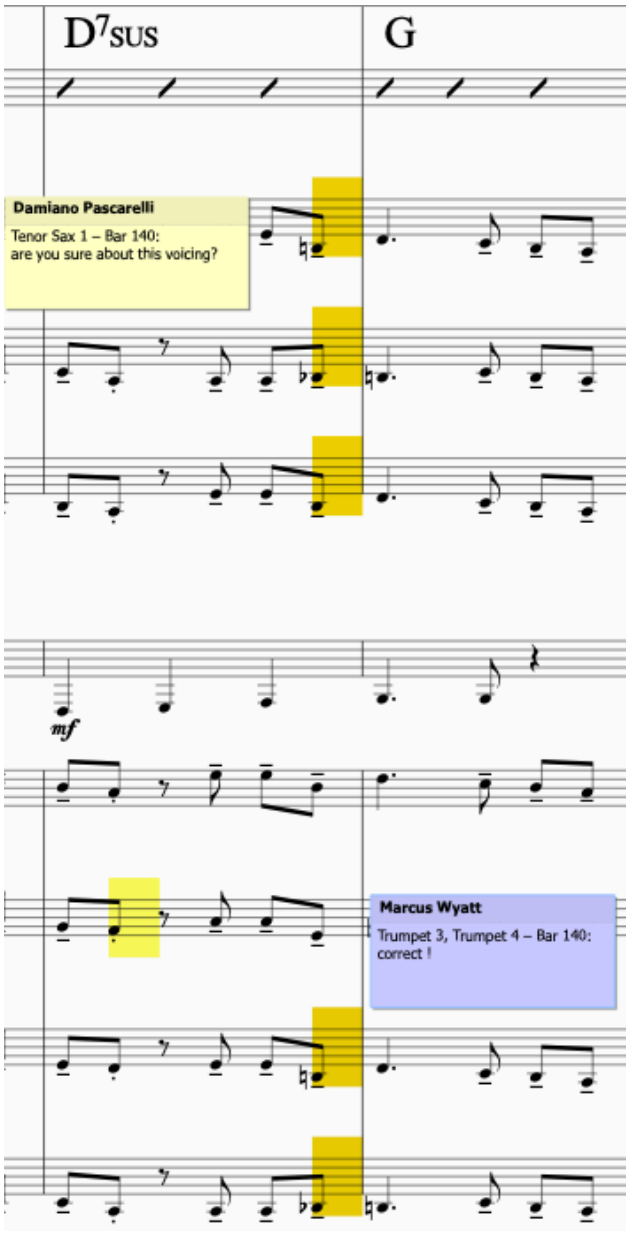


Figure 8 Angel Nemali: Minor second clash

This gave me pause to consider why I had included it. One of the elements of Abdullah Ibrahim's music that I was always drawn to was his simultaneous use of both a minor and major third. This purposeful use of dissonance within a diatonic or predominantly consonant framework could be attributed to the influence of Thelonious Monk on the renowned South African pianist (Reich, 2020). I have used the same device in this instance, with minor third (the Bb) and major third (the B natural) voiced together, over the background harmony of a G major chord. Each of these notes resolves to different notes, and though the clash is momentary, it does create some brief, but pleasing dissonance in an otherwise mostly diatonic melody.

Bombella

Composed by Abdullah Ibrahim
Arranged and orchestrated by Mike Campbell

Bombella: Curation and Contextual Considerations

This lesser known, up-tempo song is from Abdullah Ibrahim's 1983 album *Zimbabwe* (he was still Dollar Brand at that time). The title refers to the coal train that transported miners to the mines and away from their homelands and families.

This is not one of Ibrahim's most famous works, but it is a work that implies the influence of McCoy Tyner's energetic and spiritual modal approach (as evidenced by a lot of Tyner's work with John Coltrane.) Both Tyner and Coltrane have had a significant influence on South African jazz artists and their works. (Makhathini, 2021), and there is a resonance with their spiritual approach to their music.

Listening to the original recording, it is evident that the main section of the song lacks a discernible melody, with only a brief melody appearing on the bridge. The song functions more as a platform for improvisation, presenting a challenging task for the arranger/orchestrator, Mike Campbell, who was specifically chosen for his outstanding and innovative abilities in this field. As an experienced musician who has lived and worked in the Western Cape for over 35 years, Campbell possesses a deep understanding of the Cape Jazz style and has collaborated with numerous jazz legends, including Winston Mankunku Ngozi, Robbie Jansen, Ezra Ngcukana, and Abdullah Ibrahim.

When responding to my question of how to solve the challenge of arranging Bombella with so little melodic material to work with, Campbell states:

> In the original "Bombella" the first formal section has no melody, and is a vehicle for improvisation more than anything else. To add orchestral color, I viewed this section as an extended introduction to the major-key melody, which follows, building some tension and the expectation of what was to come. I used the 8th-note triplet motif from that melody to hint at this and as a unifying device, appearing as it does in different sections of the orchestra. (Campbell, 2023)

As Campbell mentions in this statement, the bridge of this song modulates to the major, and its parallel chord progression movement and across-the-beat rhythm (which imply an odd

time signature), to my ear, speaks to the possible influence of Dave Brubeck on South African musicians, To this, Campbell adds:

> There is much drama in Brubeck's music, both in his compositions and piano improvisations; a sort of showmanship that Abdullah Ibrahim brings to some of his work. The major-key melody with its emphatic structure after the long, loose modal improvisation makes for such a dramatic event in this tune, theatrical almost (ibid).

Abdullah Ibrahim is undoubtedly a crucial figure in South African jazz and thus deserves inclusion in any South African songbook. Moreover, including Ibrahim's music presented an opportunity to introduce the primarily British audience to a less familiar side of his sound

Qongqothwane (The Click Song)

Traditional
Arranged and orchestrated by Marcus Wyatt

Qongqothwane: Curation and Contextual Considerations

Qongqothwane (The Click Song) is a traditional Xhosa wedding song, sung to bring good luck or fortune to the newlyweds (Makeba, 1971).It was made famous around the world by Miriam Makeba, and over the years the song and ‘Mama Africa’ became synonymous with one another. Makeba was one of South Africa’s most important voices, a global icon who rallied tirelessly against the apartheid regime, through song, or through her work with the United Nations (Bethlehem, 2017)

Though this is a traditional song, many people mistakenly believe that Makeba wrote it. A testament to how popular both Makeba and the song became, it was even covered by Cher in 1968. It is interesting to note here that this was the only song prescribed by the BBC (they wanted either Qongqothwane or Pata Pata included in the program). Qongqothwane is undoubtedly one of the most famous South African songs, and it has become an important part of the country's cultural heritage. Its inclusion in any songbook on South African music would be both appropriate and necessary.

Qongqothwane: Musical considerations

The song "Qongqothwane" is an example of a variation on two common harmonic forms in South African music. The first is the progression from chord I to chord II Major (or II Dominant, which could be seen as a secondary dominant, if viewed through a functional harmony lens). The second is the classic I-IV-V progression. These two forms result in a four-chord structure of I, IIMajor, V, and back to I. In the key of F, this would be F, G, Csus4, F. The challenge in arranging or orchestrating this somewhat overplayed song was to infuse it with a fresh and original character while still remaining faithful to its celebratory spirit. In approaching the arrangement, a somewhat playful approach was adopted, with a focus on staccato and pizzicato orchestral instruments, and minimalist style, paying homage to one of Miriam Makeba's iconic performances of the song in Stockholm in 1966.

An adaptation of that scaled-down version would primarily showcase two of the soloists, vocalist Eska and tuba player Theon Cross. The pizzicato strings (doubled by clarinets) would give the song a quirky feel, while enhancing the ever-important groove aspect.

Using staccato or pizzicato articulation on orchestral instruments would create a playful and light-hearted feel, which could be well suited to the celebratory nature of the song. In addition, keeping the arrangement minimalist would help to highlight the rhythmic and melodic elements of the song, which are often the most memorable aspects of traditional African music.

Conductor's Score
Exp. duration: 3'36"

Click Song

Miriam Makeba
Arranged for the Metropole Orkest
by Marcus Wyatt

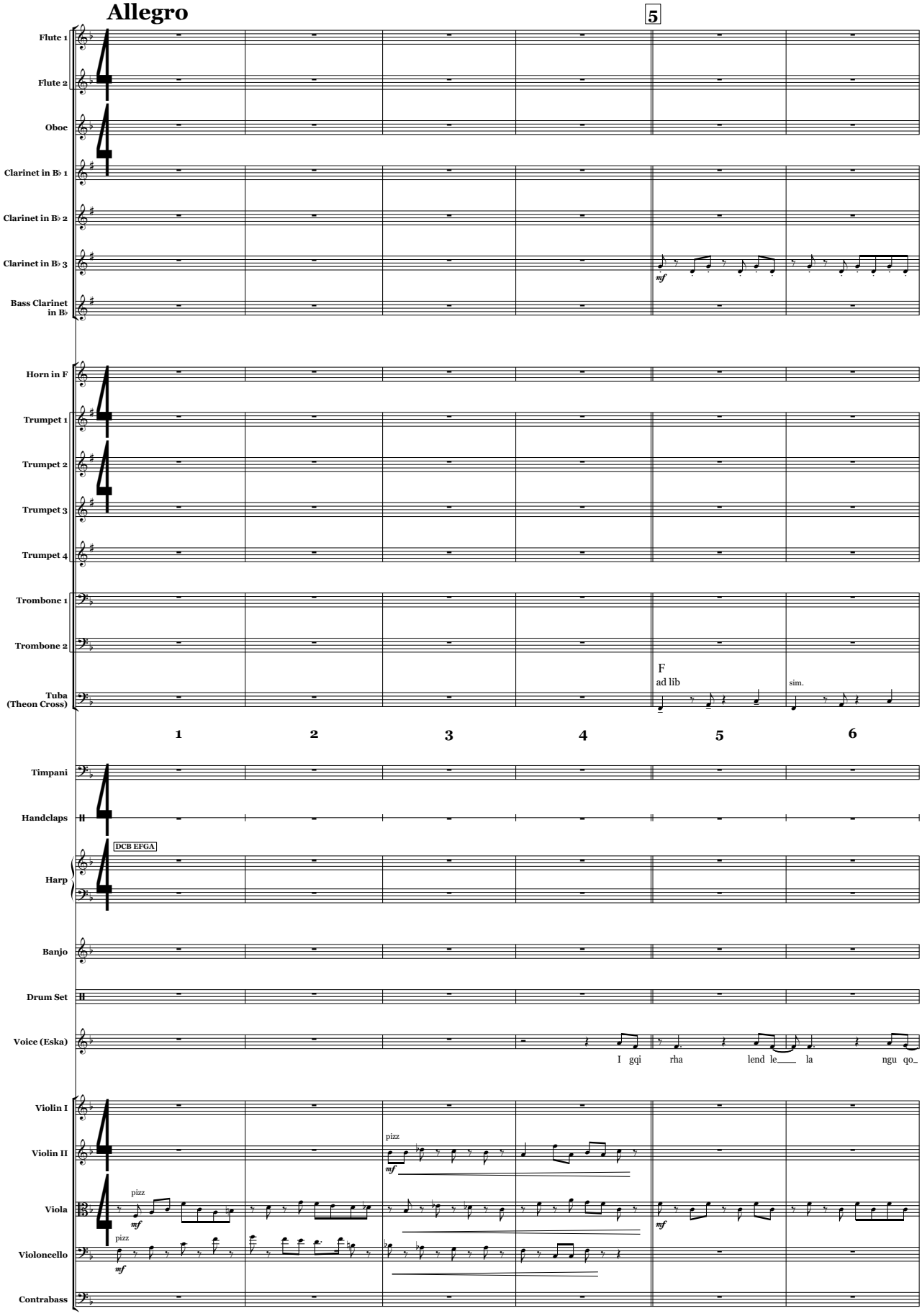


Figure 9A Qongqothwane (Click Song): Introduction

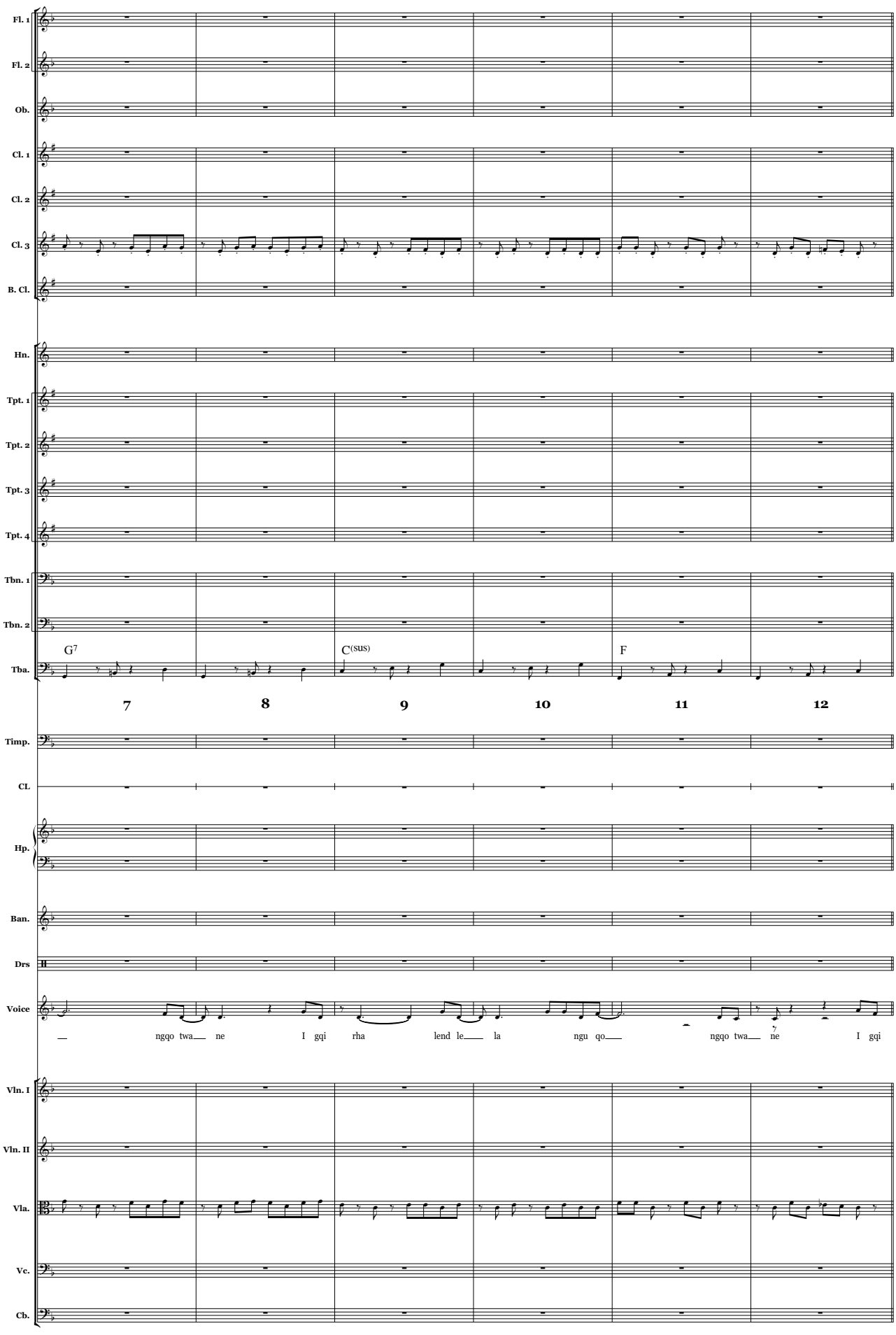


Figure 9B Qonqothwane (Click Song): Staccato/pizzicato woodwinds and strings

As the arrangement develops, it builds into a ghoema rhythmic feel, over which the horns sound the celebration with repeated driving riffs, and the chords are reharmonised, giving the melody a sharpened 11th sound. Here the groove is driven by the trumpets, tuba and trombone in tandem with percussion and drums, resulting in a lively and upbeat sound reminiscent of a street parade. This evokes a similar atmosphere to that of the annual Cape Town Carnival parades, which feature exuberant and colourful displays of music and dance.

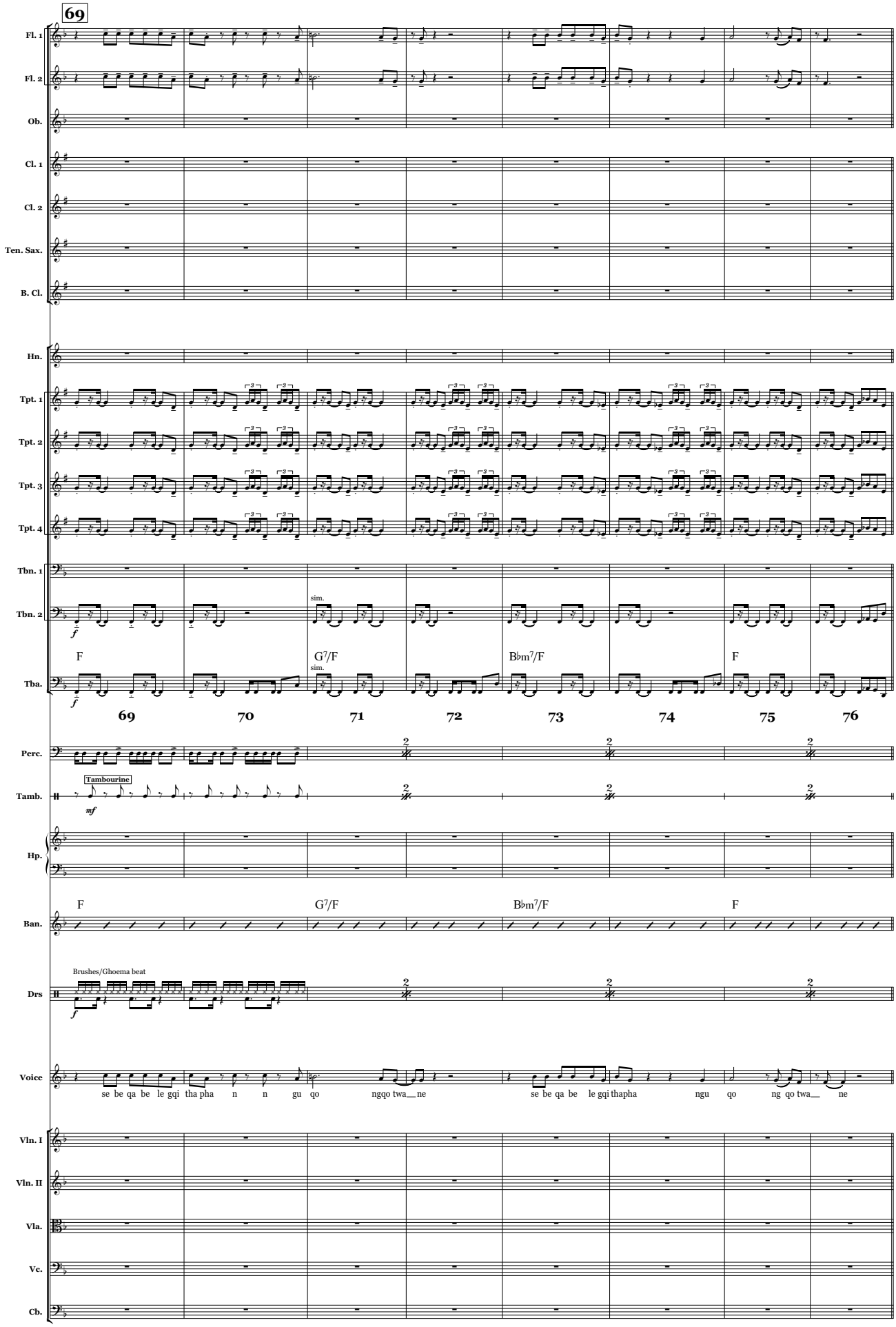


Figure 10 Qongqothawne (Click Song): Bar 69 - 76

The arrangement ultimately concludes with a return to the stripped-down voice and tuba duet that opens the piece, once again paying tribute to Makeba's powerful Stockholm performance. This final section could be interpreted as a metaphorical representation of the conclusion of a wedding celebration, where all the excitement and dancing comes to an end, and the newlyweds depart alone together.

Age Of Inner Knowing

Composed by Bheki Mseleku
Arranged for big band by Afrika Mkhize, and orchestrated by Viwe Mkizwana

Age Of Inner Knowing: Curation and Contextual Considerations

Bheki Mseleku's beloved ballad "Age of Inner Knowing," is a notable track from his album *Celebration*. Mseleku holds a prominent position in the South African jazz scene as a pianist, saxophonist, composer, and innovator. He is widely regarded as one of the greatest pianists to come out of the country and has been praised for his unique sound that blends traditional South African music with a more modern American jazz sensibility. During his time in exile, he collaborated with various renowned European and American musicians, including Abbey Lincoln, Pharoah Saunders and Joe Henderson. Mseleku's music features the sounds of township Marabi, as well as the influence of McCoy Tyner and John Coltrane, both in their sound and spiritual approach to the music (Lilley, 2020). "Age of Inner Knowing" is an example of South African jazz heavily influenced by American jazz, yet still featuring the hallmark of simplicity in melody and chord structure that is typical of the genre. Andrew Lilley (2020) describes the song thus:

> The style of the composition invokes a flavour reminiscent of the modal compositional concepts explored by players like Miles Davis and seen in tunes like ‘Nardis’51 as well as Wayne Shorter’s ‘Speak no Evil’52 (which begins with the same opening chords and also mixes major and minor sensibilities with functional and modal harmonies)

This song was arranged for big band by South African pianist Afrika Mkhize (somewhat of an Mseleku disciple himself), and was orchestrated for this performance by bassist Viwe Mkizwana. Mkhize's arrangement highlighted the essence of the song, and was both a vehicle for the pianist and the tenor saxophone player, which one could argue was another nod to Tyner and Coltrane, while bassist Viwe Mkizwana's orchestration contributed an additional layer of depth without compromising Mkhize's or Mseleku's artistic vision. As a seminal work in the South African jazz repertoire, "Age of Inner Knowing" provides a valuable glimpse into the creative oeuvre of one of the country's most creative, important and yet relatively unknown musicians. Mseleku's legacy continues to inspire and influence a new generation of jazz musicians in South Africa and beyond.

Lakutshon' Ilanga/Ntyilo Ntyilo

Composed by Mackay Davashe/Alan Salinga
Arranged and orchestrated by Marcus Wyatt

Lakutshon' Ilanga/Ntyilo Ntyilo: Curation and Contextual considerations

(I will primarily be discussing Lakutshon' Ilanga and not Ntyilo Ntyilo here, as the latter song is only quoted as one short phrase)

The song "Lakutshon' ilanga", meaning "When the sun sets" in isiXhosa, is an old composition by Mackay Davashe, which gained fame through performances by Miriam Makeba and The Manhattan Brothers. During the apartheid era in South Africa, government officials would arrest suspected freedom fighters, leading to disappearances and tragic endings for many individuals. "Lakutshon' ilanga" can be interpreted as the story of a person searching for their missing loved one, pledging to remember them with every sunset and persisting in their search until they are reunited (Allen, 2002) .

The decision to include this song in the repertoire for the concert was based on two primary factors: Firstly, it is one of South Africa's most well known and frequently performed jazz ballads, making it an important addition to the country's jazz canon. Secondly, this specific arrangement draws inspiration from Louis Moholo's interpretation of the song, which includes a final statement from another beloved ballad, "Ntyilo Ntyilo". The arrangement is a

testament to the lesser-known influence that free jazz had on some of the most influential musicians and musical compositions to come out of South Africa.

The Blue Notes were a sextet comprising of Chris McGregor (piano), Johnny Dyani (bass), Mongezi Feza (trumpet), Dudu Pukwana (alto saxophone), Nick Moyake (tenor saxophone) and Louis Moholo (drums). When they left South African in 1964, they were primarily a hard-bop outfit, but the longer they stayed in exile, the more their music and their playing started to gravitate towards the less constrained forms of free jazz and the avant-garde. It could be argued that the pain of being forcibly separated from their homeland would find an outlet within the creative space these pioneers occupied. The melodies became fragmented, the riffs were explosive and the harmonies were stretched, all on top of the relentless and restless rumbling of Dyani and Moholo (Dalamba, 2019). The Blue Notes have been credited with playing a significant role in the development of the free and avant-garde jazz scene in the UK, as has been previously noted with regard to Tete and Barbs (Carr, 1973).

Lakutshon' Ilanga/Ntyilo Ntyilo: Musical considerations

It's not hard to imagine how a beautiful South African ballad could be deconstructed and reassembled in such a 'chaotic' manner, given the political climate of oppression and gross violation of human rights taking place in the country at the time. I first encountered Moholo's version while rehearsing with him for a performance in Johannesburg around 2001. The melody of "Lakutshon' Ilanga" was introduced at a very high tempo, the complete opposite of a gentle ballad, after which the band dissolved into collective free improvisation. The bridge was then introduced, where the melody was played *rubato* on top of the rumbling, churning rhythm section. This was one of the first times I'd properly engaged with such free interpretation of a jazz song, and I recall being greatly moved by the energy and translation of the emotion around the song. This inspired a similar version I arranged for a heritage project, 'The Blue Notes Tribute Orkestra' (BNTO), and from this came the orchestral big band arrangement. Moholo's original 'derrangement' had the melody in unison, and so I primarily based the harmonies on the song's original chord structure.

The song opens in the original ballad form, with two brief statements of the melody, first played by the strings and then echoed with voice and piano, played in *rubato* style.

Conductor's Score
Exp. duration: 2'54"

METROPOLE ORKEST
Davashe/Silinga
Arranged for the Metropole Orkest
by Marcus Wyatt

Lakutshon' Ilanga - Ntyilo Ntyilo

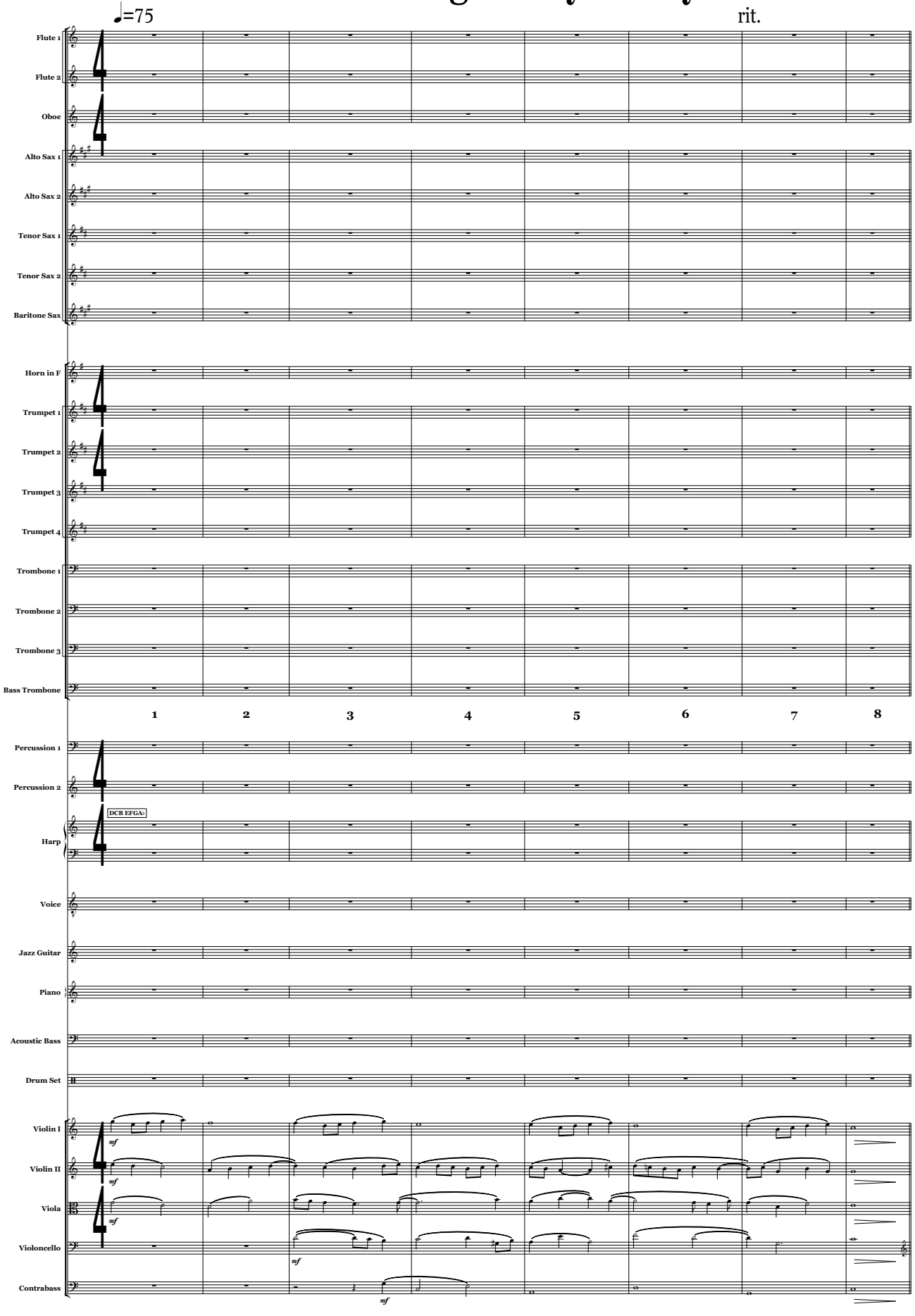


Figure 11A Lakutshon'ilanga/Ntyilo Ntyilo: Introduction

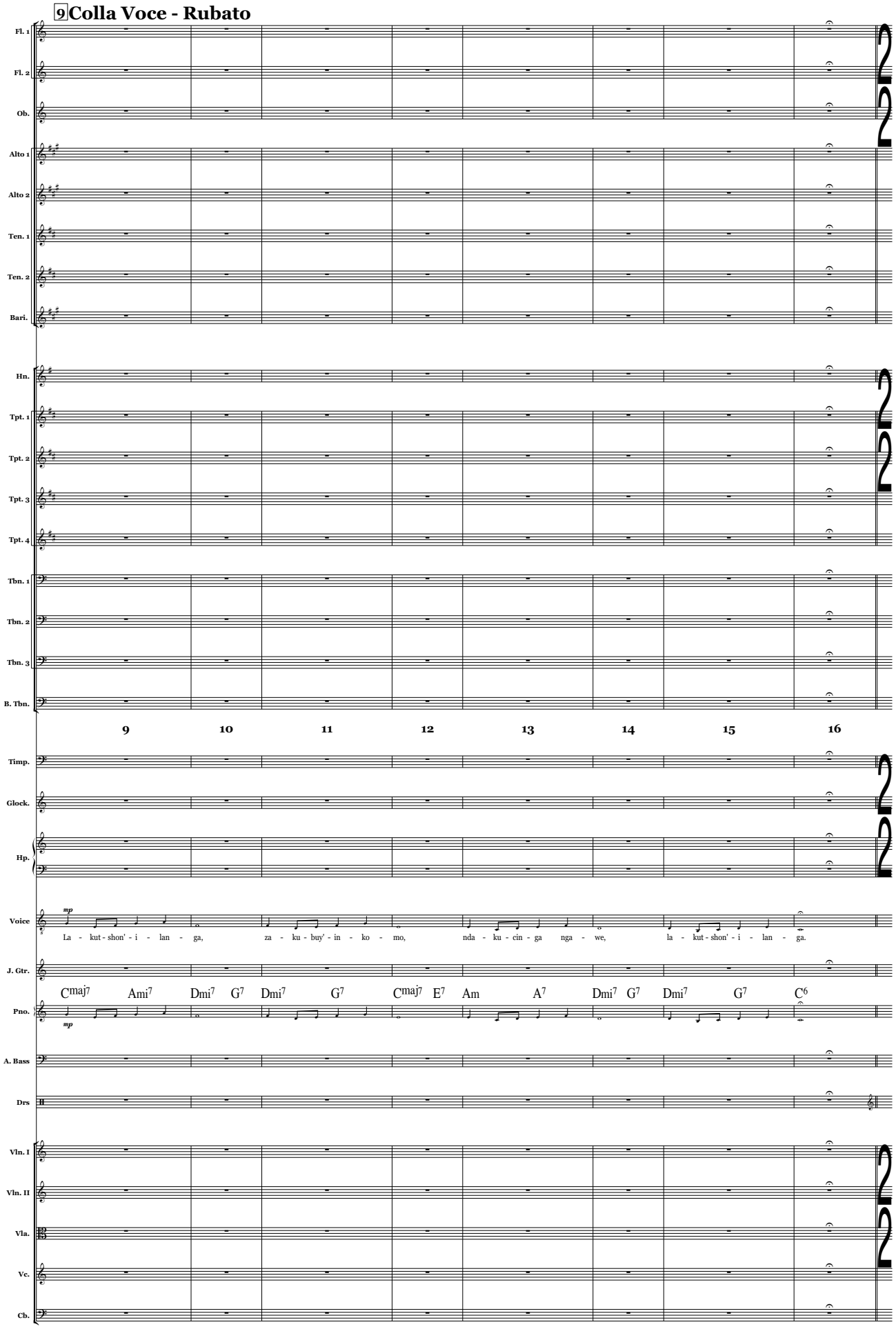


Figure 11B Lakutshon'ilanga/Ntyilo Ntyilo: Introduction continued

The melody then erupts in high tempo, first in unison, and then harmonized with a more dissonant approach to the voicings, with brief periods of free collective improvisation in between. The drummer is freely improvising under all of this.

See next pages, Figure 12, which shows this.

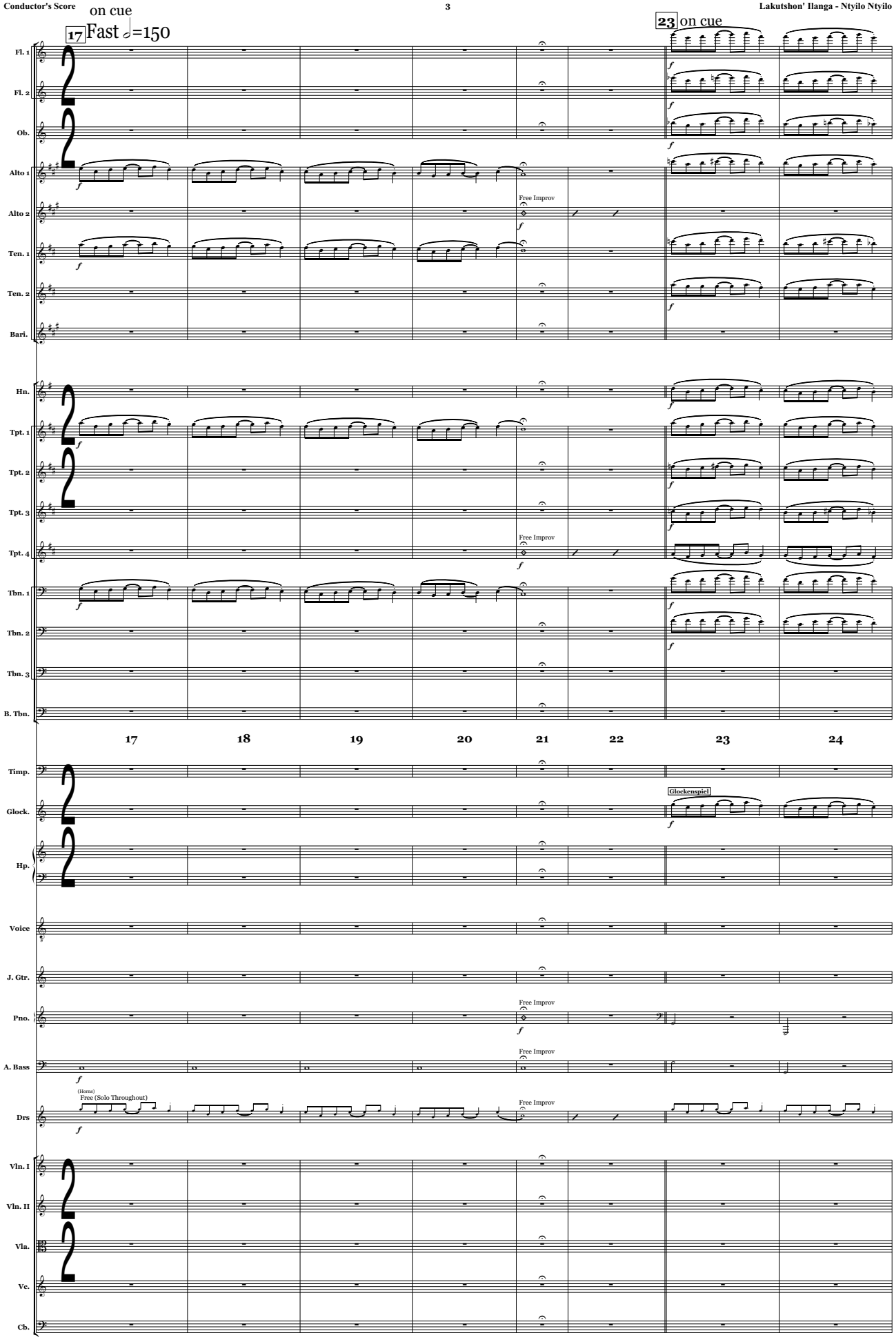


Figure 12 Lakutshon'ilanga/Ntyilo Ntyilo Bar 17 - 24

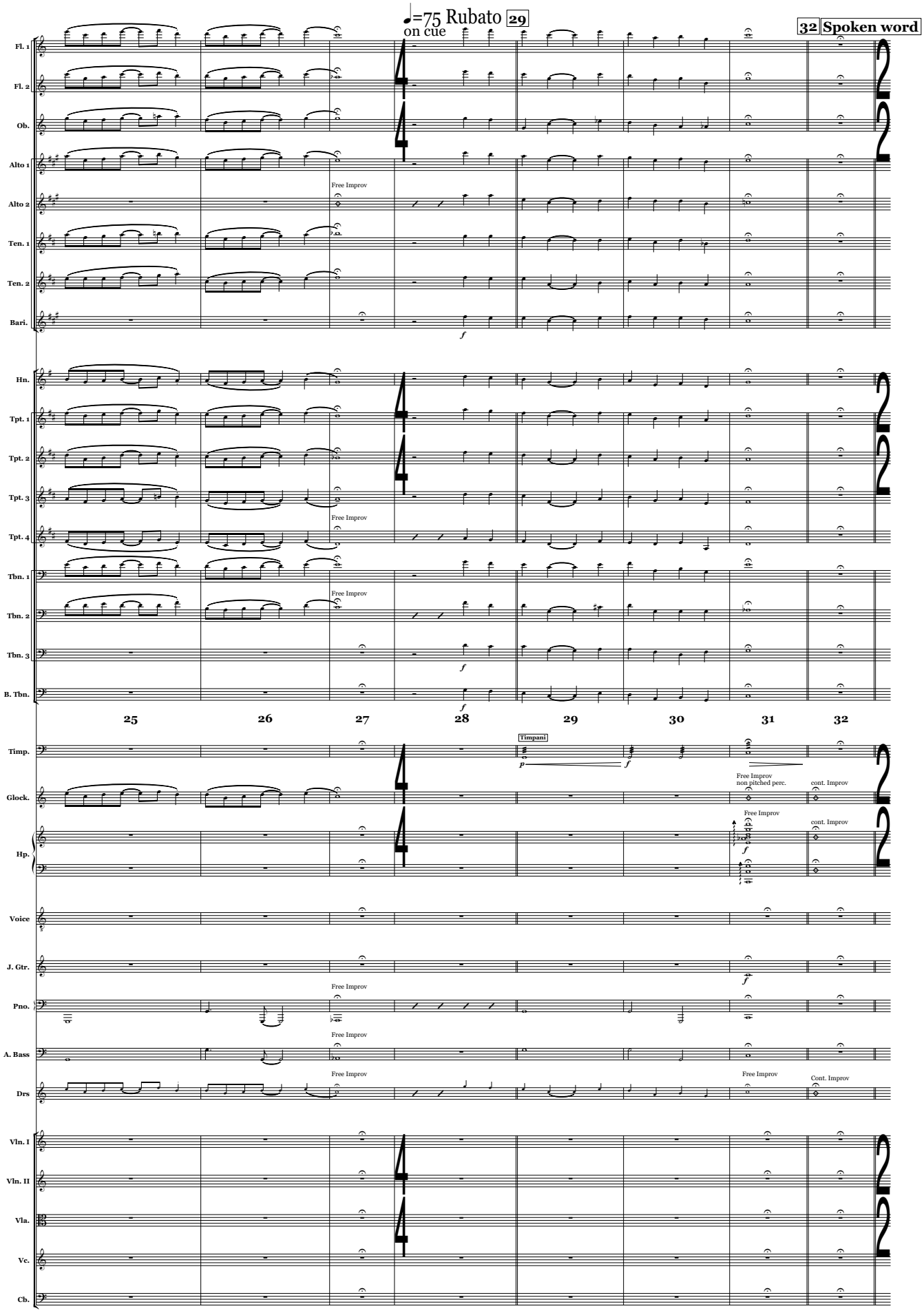


Figure 12B Lakutshon'ilanga/Ntyilo Ntyilo Bar 25- 32

Another difference of perspective between the Metropole's European arranger and myself was the approach to the harmonized melody voicings. While Pascarelli sought to 'correct' the voicings to make them more palatable by aligning them more closely with the chords and melody, my approach favoured more dissonant notes, resulting in a sound that may have sounded 'wrong'. This was in deference to something I have encountered many times as a working musician in South Africa, where one might hear someone seemingly 'ignoring' the 'correct' chord changes, but where the 'intention' behind their note choices seems to justify the sometimes jarring sound. When listening to some of those more 'free' recordings by members of the Blue Notes, it could be argued that the notes themselves are merely vehicles for the frustration and pain these 'exiles' must have felt. At times this could be interpreted as 'wailing' or 'crying' as oppose to playing notes that might be construed as wrong, or foreign to the tonality at play.

In her essay in the collection "Composing Apartheid: Music for and against apartheid", Muller (2018) states:

> In the South African context, improvisation can serve as a form of sonic testimony or witness, expressing experiences of struggle, resistance, and oppression. It can convey emotions that are difficult to articulate in words, giving voice to pain, anger, and frustration, as well as hope, joy, and celebration (Muller, 2018, p. 430) (Allen et al., 2018) .

The figure below shows my interaction with Pascarelli about the approach to these voicings.

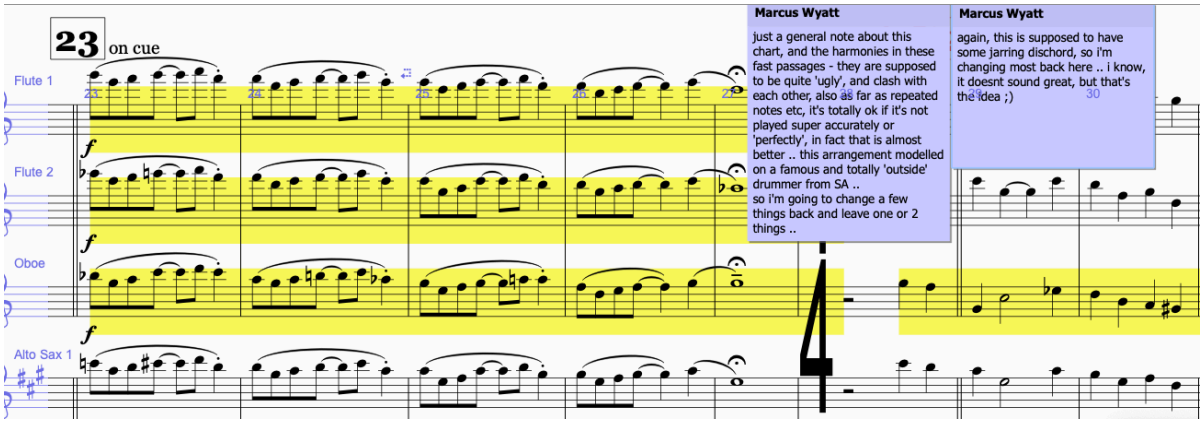


Figure 13 Lakutshon'ilanga/Ntyilo Ntyilo voicings

After the initial melody, the composition incorporates a section of slam poetry, which pays homage to the spoken word and vocal storytelling traditions of South Africa and their intersection with the jazz and free jazz movements. Following the slam poetry section, the bridge is introduced and harmonized in a more conventional and tonal manner, utilizing the traditional four- or five- part voicings that were mentioned in my discussions of "MRA" and "Angel Nemali". The arrangement then briefly revisits the melody in its original ballad form before concluding with another free interpretation of the closing statement of "Ntyilo Ntyilo."

With this arrangement, my intention was to juxtapose the beauty and serenity of the original ballad, with the frenetic free interpretation by Moholo. This approach can be interpreted as a metaphor for South Africa and its tumultuous history. Additionally, the contrast between the song's lyrics, describing the beauty of the sunset in South Africa and the uncertainty of seeing a loved one who has been forcibly removed, further reinforces this duality.

Bantu

Composed by Zim Ngqawana
Arranged for big band by Marcus Wyatt; orchestrated by Mike Campbell

Bantu: Curation and Contextual Considerations

Zim Ngqawana was a prominent South African saxophonist and musician whose influence spanned from the 1990s to the 2000s. He continued the legacy of great alto players such as Dudu Pukwana, Kippie Moeketsi, and Barney Rachabane. His music was a notable example of South African jazz that honoured its American roots while also drawing heavily on indigenous and traditional music. Ngqawana's sound was deeply rooted in Xhosa traditional music, Western art music, and jazz, and he was a highly conscious and deliberate musician with a strong commitment to African activism (Eato, 2012).

The song "Bantu" is a marabi-inspired composition that employs a simple harmonic progression of I-IV-V, which utilises the technique of alternating between major and minor tonalities while maintaining a nearly identical melodic structure. The composition also contains allusions to the New Orleans second-line tradition, which exerted a significant influence on the Cape's carnival street music and the emergence of the ghoema style (Coplan, David B. (David Bellin), 2007). The inclusion of the banjo in the orchestral arrangement, serves to link the musical traditions of New Orleans and Dixieland with the distinctive "Cape" sound.

Bantu also bears a discernible influence of samba, a musical style that seems to hold some prominence in the musical repertoire of Cape Town (Muller, 2001) . Works such as "Harold's Bossa" by Hotep Galeta and "Cape Samba" by McCoy Mrubata are prime examples of this connection. It can be argued that this song encapsulates many of the defining characteristics that underpin both the Eastern and Western Cape jazz styles. As such, its inclusion in the Songbook is well justified. Additionally, the song's joyful and celebratory nature, which is a recurring feature in South African jazz, strengthens its significance.

Connected

Composed by Marcus Wyatt
Arranged and orchestrated by Marcus Wyatt

Connected: Curation and Contextual considerations

At some point in this document's creation, I was forced to ask myself how I could rationalize the inclusion of two of my own compositions alongside those of such revered and emblematic figures in South African music. My intent was not to suggest that my own work was worthy of being held in the same regard as that of these luminaries, but rather to ensure that the overall program was well balanced. Connected was originally commissioned by the South African Music Rights Organisation (SAMRO) for the now defunct overseas bursary competition for singers. The intention behind the composition was to convey the essence of the South African experience by celebrating the country's uniqueness while also acknowledging its painful history. The lyrics convey a message of hope and emphasize the importance of working together to create a better future for generations to come. The song was specifically written for performance by a strong and versatile vocalist, as it was intended for a vocal competition. In this instance it provided an opportunity to showcase the talents of one of the guest soloists, Eska.

Connected is a composition that incorporates several characteristic musical devices from the South African musical canon, and its lyrics convey a sense of optimism and a vision for a brighter future, seen through the perspective of the younger generation. As a result, the inclusion of this piece, written by a contemporary South African jazz musician, served to balance out the program alongside the iconic works of the esteemed composers in the line-up.

Connected: Musical considerations

Connected has a long form, meandering through several key changes, primarily in minor keys, which lead and crescendo towards resolution into a section in a major key. This section features variations on a stock South African progression. After the brief introduction by the orchestral instruments and rhythm section, the melody begins with the stripped down sound of voice and piano, gradually building with new layers of instrumentation and dynamics introduced with each new section or transposition. The ascending bass movement and the gradual addition of instruments, accompanied by a long crescendo through the minor progressions, create a sense of tension that ultimately leads to resolution. The eventual shift

to a major I-IV-V progression, combined with the lyrics, reinforces the song's primary message of hope, evoking a strong emotional response in the listener.

The artistic decision to bookend the song with only the voice and minimal accompaniment serves a deliberate purpose: to emphasize the fragile yet powerful nature of each individual voice contributing to the collective spirit of South Africa.

Connected is also another example of the triplet feel so prevalent in South Africa jazz, a ‘waltz’. Similar to Angel Nemali, this is an example of a lilting piece in 3/4 time, that can accommodate both a swing and a straight feel.

In the figure that follows, the harp part is instructed to play with a ‘straight feel’ whereas the rest of the group is instructed to ‘swing’. This approach ensures that the overall swing feel is maintained without compromising the comfort level of the orchestral players, who may be more accustomed to a straight feel. Thus, a balanced approach can be achieved by allowing some of the classical instruments to play in their comfort zone with a ‘straight’ feel, while the rhythm section and big band instruments swing.

Marcus Wyatt
Arranged for the Metropole Orkest
by Marcus Wyatt

Connected

♩ = 130

1 Jazz Waltz (8ths lightly swung)

legato phrasing throughout

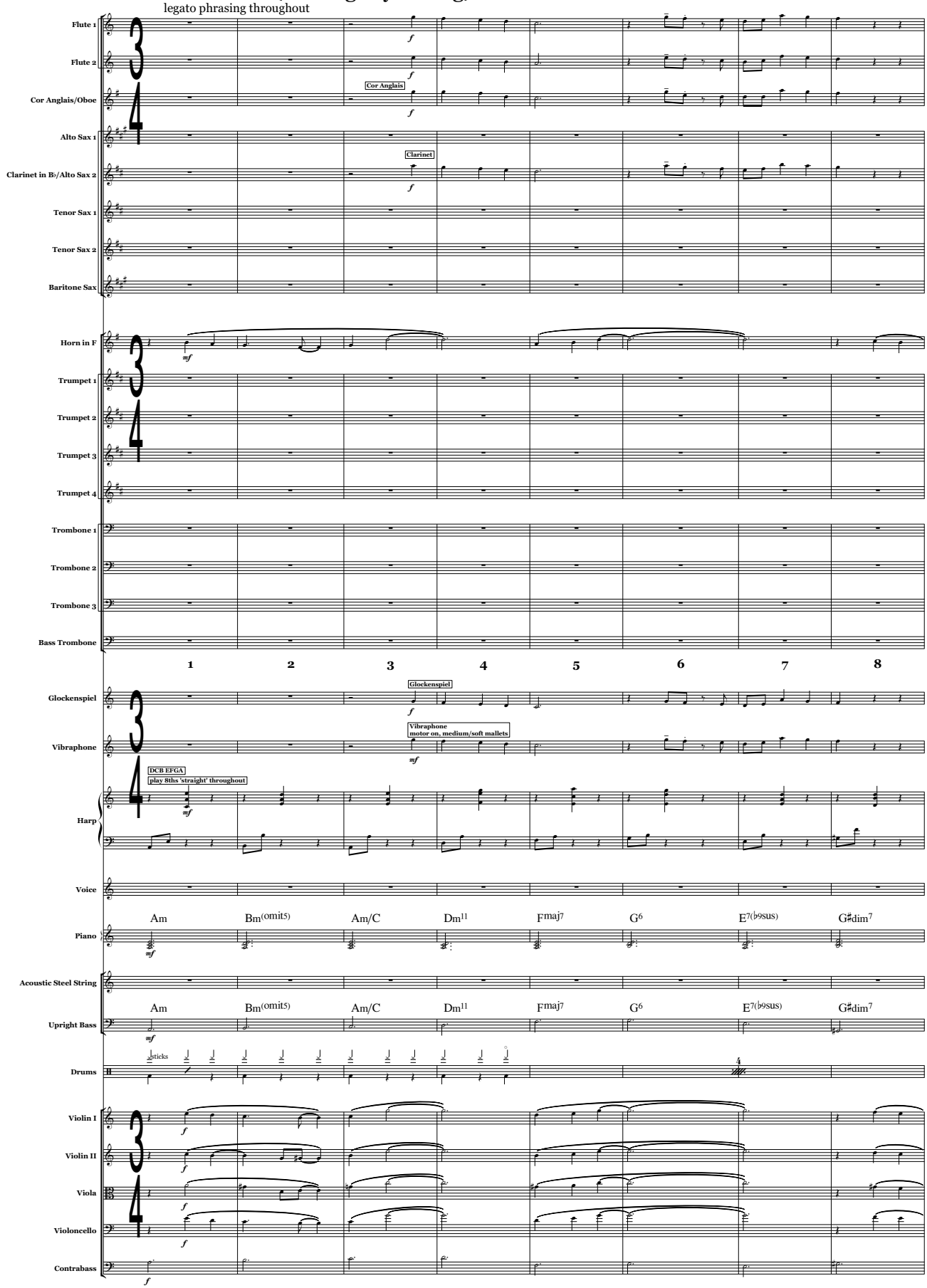


Figure 14 Connected: Introduction

The following excerpts show the use of quadruplets in the melody, played by woodwinds and saxophones. These are played across the 3/4 swing feel which the rhythm section employs. This is another example of the polyrhythmic relationship between 3/4 , 6/8 and 4/4 time, described previously, and which also features in Angel Nemali.

See next page for Figure 15, Connected: Bars 49 – 56

And following page for Figure 16, Connected: Bars 65 - 72

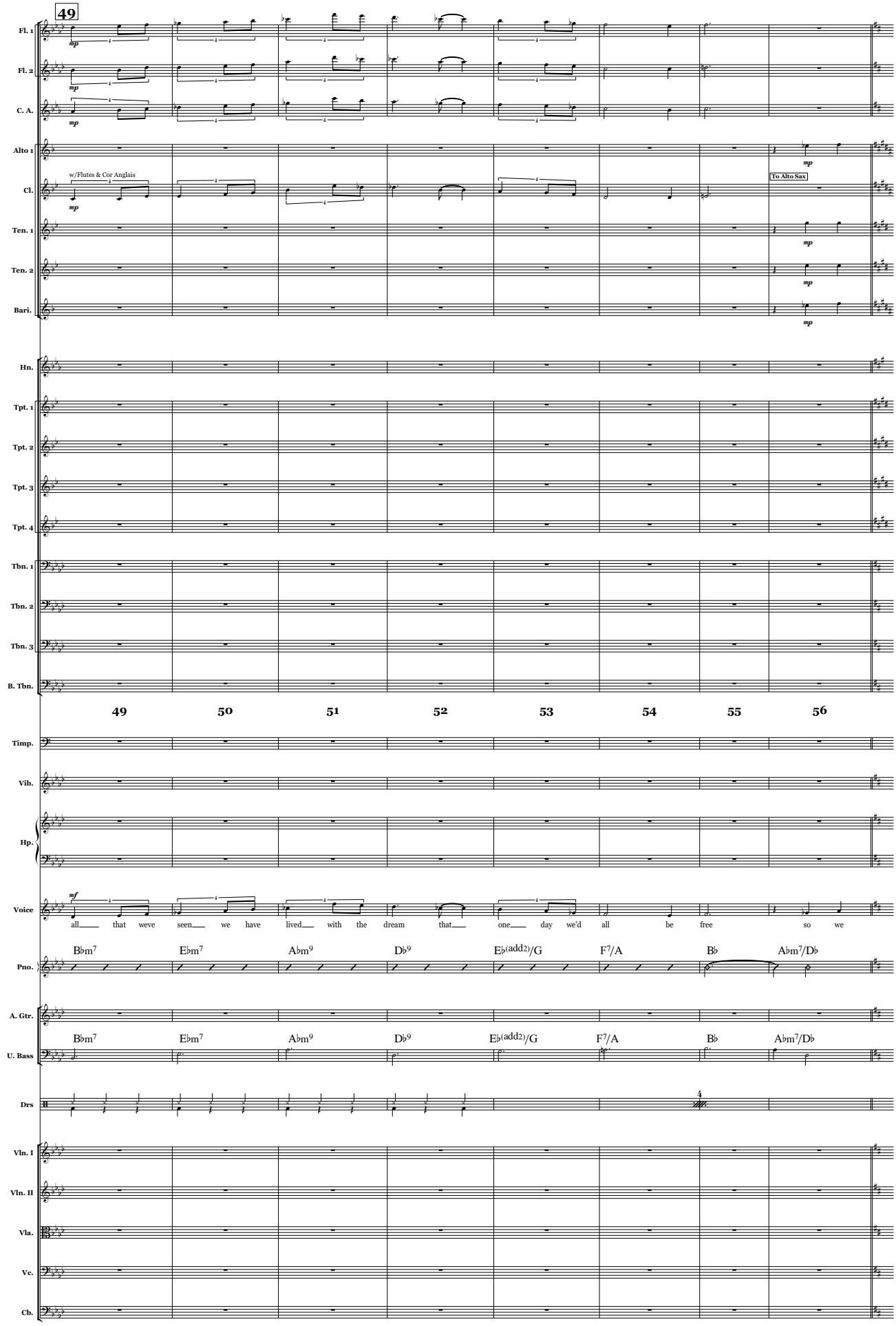


Figure 15 Connected: Bars 49 -56

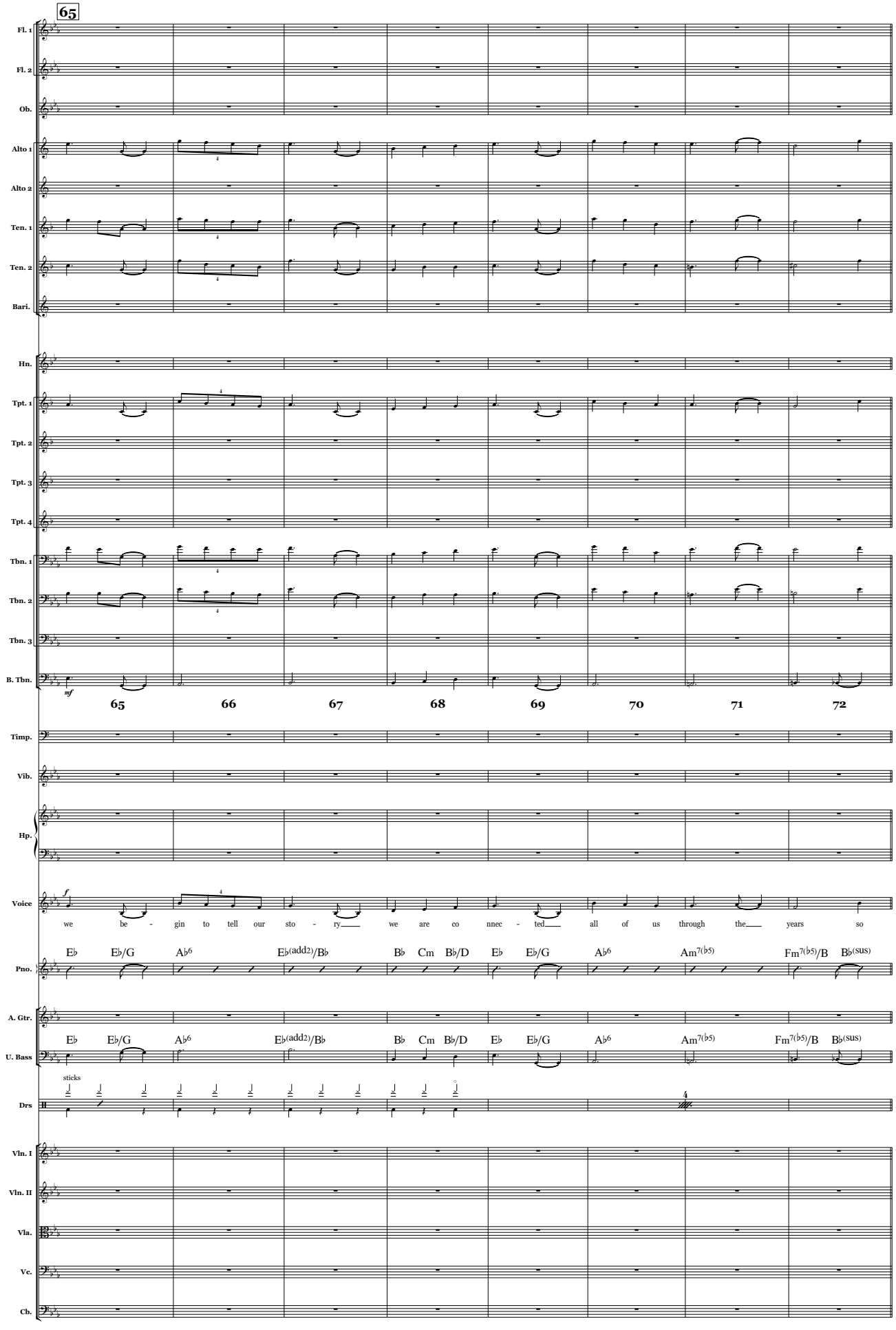


Figure 16 Connected: Bars 65 - 72

The next figure, on the following page, shows an example similar to the technique used in ‘Angel Nemali’, where the woodwinds play a straight phrase while the remainder of the ensemble plays with a swing feel.

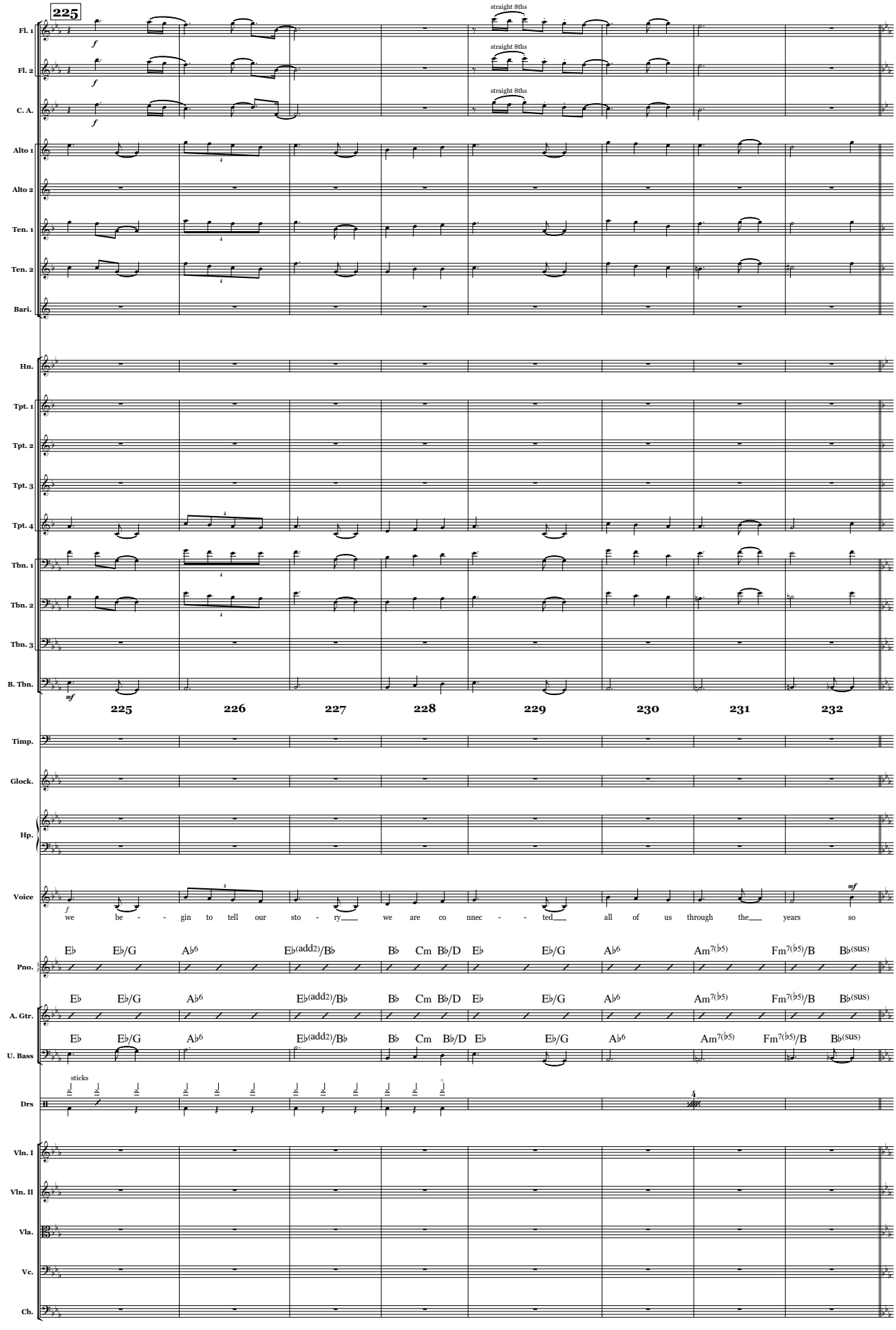


Figure 17 Connected: Bars 225 - 232

The use of a suspended chord for the dominant (V) chord is a common feature in South African jazz. In fact, it is often represented as chord I in the second inversion, with the fifth degree in the bass, and the second degree added. This aspect of South African jazz harmony was evident in another exchange between Pascarelli and myself. It is worth noting that an American or European musician might harmonize this movement differently, which would result in the loss of the distinctive South African flavour.

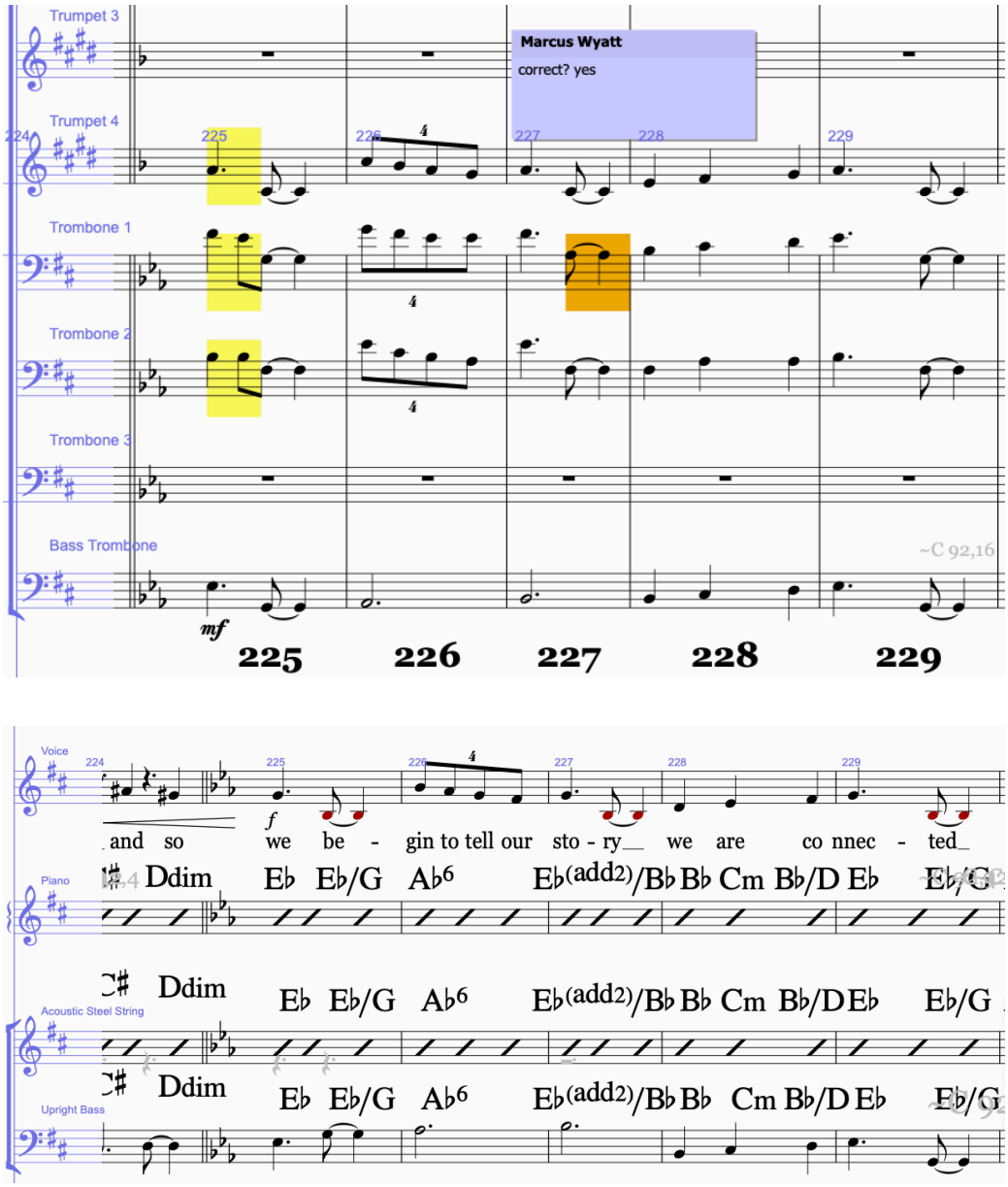


Figure 18 Connected: Bar 227 Harmonisation

Stimela

Composed by Hugh Masekela
Arranged and orchestrated by David Cousins

Stimela: Curation and Contextual considerations

Hugh Masekela's iconic composition, which alludes to the coal train that transported uprooted migrant labourers from their homes and families to the gold and mineral mines scattered around Johannesburg, represents a heart-wrenching protest against the inhumanities of capitalism and colonialism. The composition's structure mimics the locomotive's voyage, commencing with recurring train-like riffs and cowbells that intensify into a climax reminiscent of the steam from the train.

Its inclusion in the program is not only due to the global fame of the late Masekela, but also because of the song's persistent relevance in contemporary times. Over time, “Stimela” has garnered immense admiration and was embraced by many as a rallying call against the apartheid system's exploitation of the black population (Versola, 2018).

I engaged pianist David Cousins to arrange and orchestrate this song, as he is one of the more experienced South Africans in this field. Considering the minimalist nature of the song, I was confident Cousins would be able to enhance the essence of ‘Stimela’ through his creative orchestration techniques, as evidenced in the train-emulating chords and riffs that occur throughout.

After the opening, the music continues with a repeated vamp, over which the emotive narration by Mthembu is performed, referencing Masekela's iconic version of the song from his album 'Hope', recorded in Washington (Masekela, 1994). The message of protest conveyed in the song is a poignant one, and its potent theme and social commentary is very much still relevant to this day.

In South Africa, there has been a longstanding concern among traditional jazz enthusiasts regarding the widespread use of the jazz label across various musical genres, ranging from pop to folk music. While the song "Stimela" can be classified as a pop song, it still adheres to the minimalist two-chord structure that is characteristic of South African jazz. As such, the song represents an intriguing fusion of these two styles.

Yakhal’ Inkomo

Composed by Winston “Mankunku” Ngozi
Arranged for big band by Afrika Mkhize, and orchestrated by Viwe Mkizwana

Yakhal’ Inkomo: Curation and Contextual considerations

The composition "Yakhal' Inkomo" has been widely regarded as one of the most significant works in the South African jazz canon and is therefore considered an essential inclusion in any songbook, or collection of iconic pieces (Washington, 2012). Its composer, Winston “Mankunku” Ngozi, is often compared to John Coltrane, not only because of his sonorous tone on the tenor saxophone but also due to his deeply rooted approach to melody and improvisation. The title of the song, which translates literally to "the bellowing bull," has been linked to the tragic events of the 1960 Sharpeville massacre and the general oppression endured by black South Africans during the apartheid regime. Some have also interpreted the song as the lament of a lone bull in a kraal, isolated from its herd, which could be seen as a metaphor for Mankunku's decision to remain in South Africa while many of his peers went into exile during the dark period of apartheid (ibid.).

Despite Mankunku's significant contributions to South African jazz, he did not attain the same level of global recognition as some of his contemporaries. In light of this, it is crucial to recognize and celebrate his work in discussions of the great masters of South African jazz.

The orchestration of the song "Yakhal' Inkomo" as arranged for big band by Afrika Mkhize, is characterized by a distinctively African approach, utilizing a 12/8 Afro-Cuban clave rhythm. The rhythmic complexity of this approach is challenging for non-African musicians to interpret, as the melody is already behind the beat and leads from the upbeat. However, despite the significant differences in feel between this rendition and the original recording, the melody itself is phrased in precisely the same manner played by both Winston Mankunku, and as arranged by Afrika Mkhize. Viwe Mkzwana's orchestration honours this Afro-Cuban influence and its unique interpretation of the melody.

Diphororo

Composed by Jonas Gwangwa
Arranged for big band by Jonas Gwangwa and Marcus Wyatt, and orchestrated by Melissa Van Der Spuy

Diphororo: Curation and Contextual Considerations

Jonas Gwangwa, a renowned trombone player and composer, is an important figure in South African jazz. He was a member of one of the country's earliest and most celebrated jazz quintets, The Jazz Epistles, which included other luminaries such as Abdullah Ibrahim, Hugh Masekela, and Kippie Moeketsi. Gwangwa's collaboration with Todd Matshikiza on the musical King Kong led to a tour in Europe, where Gwangwa, among others, went into exile instead of returning to South Africa. In subsequent years, Gwangwa worked with many globally recognized musicians and produced several acclaimed albums, including *Flowers of the Nation* (Szymczak, 2007). One of the most popular songs from this album is "Diphororo", and on the album there is both a vocal and an instrumental version of the song (Gwangwa, 1993).

The original small big band arrangement of "Diphororo", created by the composer himself, served as the basis for my big band arrangement, which combined both vocal and trombone together on the melody. The song is reminiscent of the Motown era, with its 12/8 time ballad structure and lingering, patient yet emotive melody. Its pop influence is strong, and while it may feel more pop than jazz, the arrangement provides ample space for the type of fiery, but considered solos that are characteristic of the composer's work. In addition, the arrangement offers insight into the diverse influences that have shaped South African jazz. Melissa Van Der Spuy was selected for this orchestration based on her ability to capture the lyrical and textural qualities that were integral to the arrangement of the song. Her experience as a pianist, composer, and arranger in the South African jazz scene made her a valuable collaborator in bringing out the nuances of "Diphororo".

Annake Tassou

Composed by Marcus Wyatt
Arranged for big band by Marcus Wyatt, orchestrated by Mike Campbell

Annake Tassou: Curation and Contextual Considerations

The inclusion of my composition, Annake Tassou, is not intended to assert its significance in the South African jazz repertoire. Rather, it serves as an illustration of the Cape Jazz style, which draws from my personal experience of living in Cape Town for a decade.

The composition is structured as an implied suite with three distinct movements. The first movement is marked by a prominent "churchy" spiritual sound, a style popularized by Abdullah Ibrahim, characterized by his signature rolling piano playing. The second movement draws inspiration from the vibrant and festive street carnivals of Cape Town, incorporating the melodious and percussive ghoema style, often featuring multiple drummers, horn players, banjo, and group vocals. The final movement serves as a somewhat tongue-in-cheek funeral dirge, re-stating the melody from the second movement, but in a minor tonality. While the dirge is more of a classical form, it also took hold in the slave quarters of New Orleans. In African American culture, it became associated with jazz music and the street music of New Orleans, particularly during the city's celebratory funerals (Regis, 1999). Zim Ngqawana demonstrated a fondness for the dirge sound in his music, an aspect that I found appealing. One notable instance of this, from which I have drawn some inspiration, is his inclusion of a dirge-like quality in the track "Long Waltz to Freedom" from his album *Vadzimu*, which also features the more Western classical instrumentation of harp and cello.

In order to ensure that the authentic 'Cape Town' feel of the composition was preserved, even with the addition of classical instruments in the full orchestral big band arrangement, I again sought the expertise of Mike Campbell, an arranger with a wealth of experience in Cape Jazz and large extended ensembles. I felt secure that Campbell’s orchestration would enhance the big band arrangement, whilst remaining true to the essence of the piece.

Dear Africa

Composed by Johnny Dyani and Mongezi Feza
Arranged and orchestrated by Marcus Wyatt

Dear Africa: Curation and Contextual Considerations

The final composition included in the Songbook is attributed to Johnny Dyani, a prominent South African jazz figure and composer, who was a member of the renowned group The Blue Notes. Dyani is revered as one of the most influential South African musical exiles, albeit relatively unknown to a broader audience (Opondo, 2007). The composer's significance resonates with me, and Dyani's bass riffs and compositions have served as a substantial source of inspiration. In addition to his global performance engagements, Dyani was politically active, and his association with the African National Congress (ANC) led to his appointment as a cultural ambassador in Sweden (ibid.). Dyani's artistic and political contributions to the anti-apartheid struggle have been invaluable, making "Dear Africa" an apt inclusion in the Songbook. The hymn-like musical prayer style of the composition further underscores its suitability as a concluding statement.

Dear Africa: Musical Considerations

“Dear Africa” was originally recorded in 1972 in Sweden, and the recording featured Johnny Dyani on bass, Mongezi Feza on trumpet, and Turkish percussionist Okay Temiz. The song is characterized by a minimalist and hymn like quality, with a relatively simple melody that is accompanied by a two-chord progression. This is anchored by Dyani's ascending and descending bass line. The stripped-down nature of the composition underscores its simplicity and beauty.

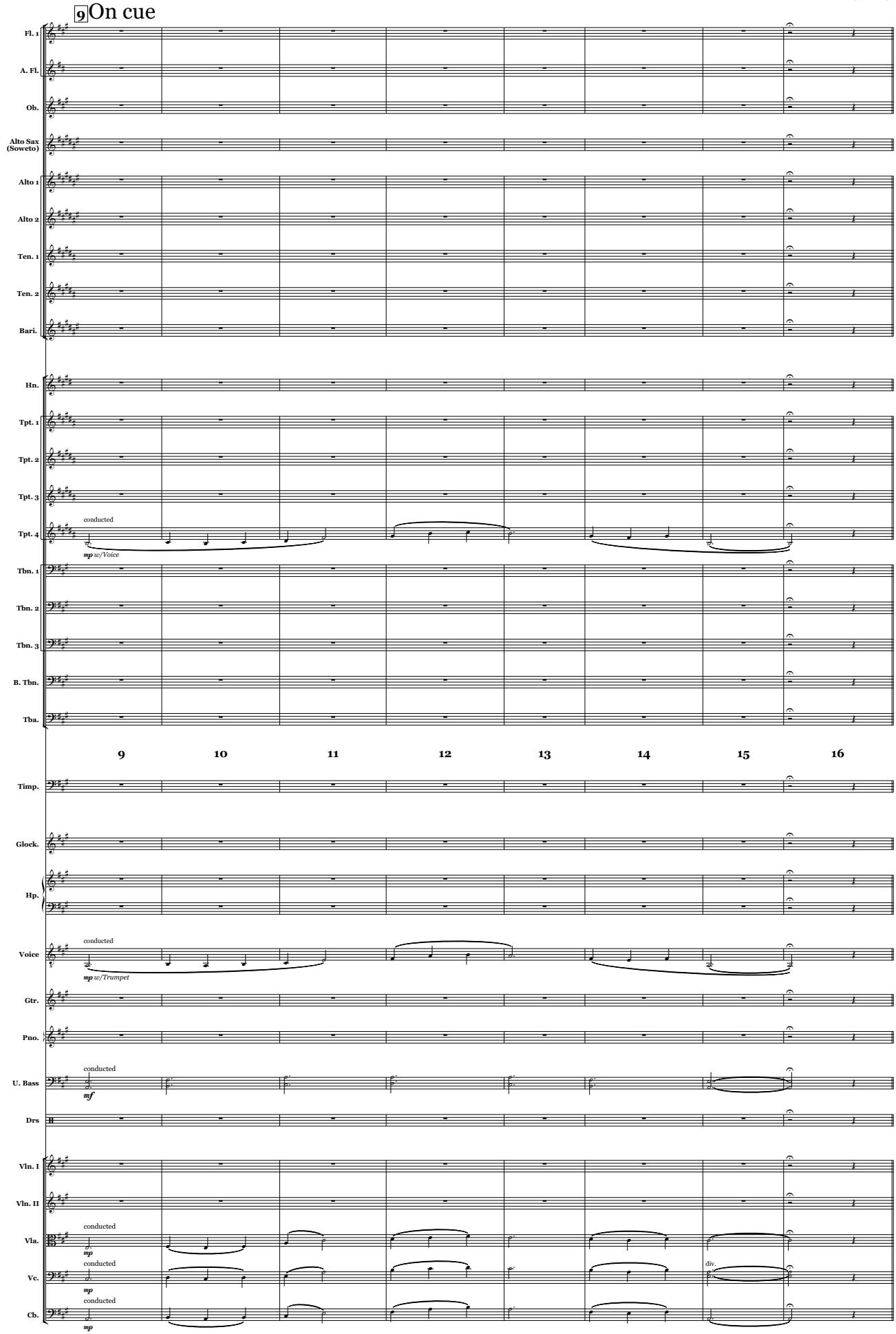


Figure 19 Dear Africa: Introduction

Dear Africa may not be as widely recognized as some of Dyani's other compositions; however, it exudes a sense of deep connection to the African landscape, infused with a distinct Eastern Cape church style. It is a minimalist and hymn like piece that is both representative of South African music and a poignant and fitting conclusion to the Songbook.

The original composition of the song consists of only 24 bars, featuring two repeated fragments of melody that are each eight bars long. In the performance presented here, the melody is initially introduced by the voice and trumpet, utilizing a free *rubato* approach that is accompanied by the bass and tuba. Upon repetition, the melody is developed into a much fuller sounding brass choir that again includes the voice, now presented up the octave. This culminates in the tag section, which serves as both a vehicle for the alto soloist (Soweto Kinch) and the two vocalists, functioning as a sort of "double sermon" or sonic prayer for Africa. Through its musical expression, the song speaks to the challenges that the continent has faced historically, as well as those that continue to confront it in the present.

It is worth noting that the tag section of the song was not present in the original composition by Johnny Dyani. As the arranger and orchestrator of the version featured in the Songbook, I added this section while attempting to maintain the essence of the original hymn-like piece.

See next page, for Figure 20, showing the tag section of "Dear Africa".

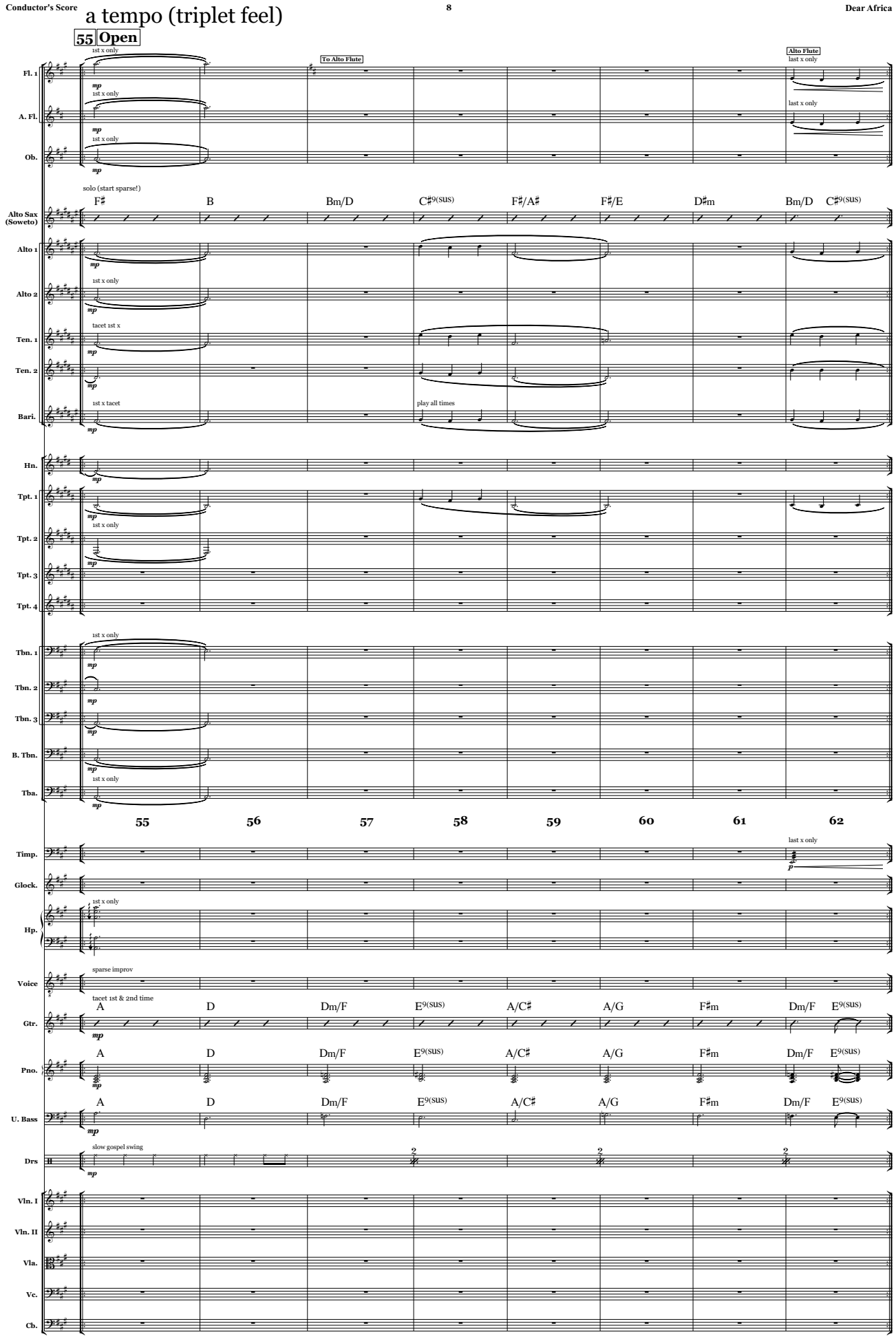


Figure 20 Dear Africa: Tag section

The tag gradually intensifies, with the entire orchestra eventually joining in at its peak, before gradually winding down towards a more subdued ending, marking the end of the sonic prayer. The use of both voice and brass, including reeds and woodwinds, in the tag of the arrangement is a deliberate homage to the rich choral and brass band traditions prevalent in Dyani's native Eastern Cape province.

Pascarelli had suggested the incorporation of marimbas in the orchestration, but as previously stated, this was an unconventional sound in South African jazz, particularly in the Eastern Cape.

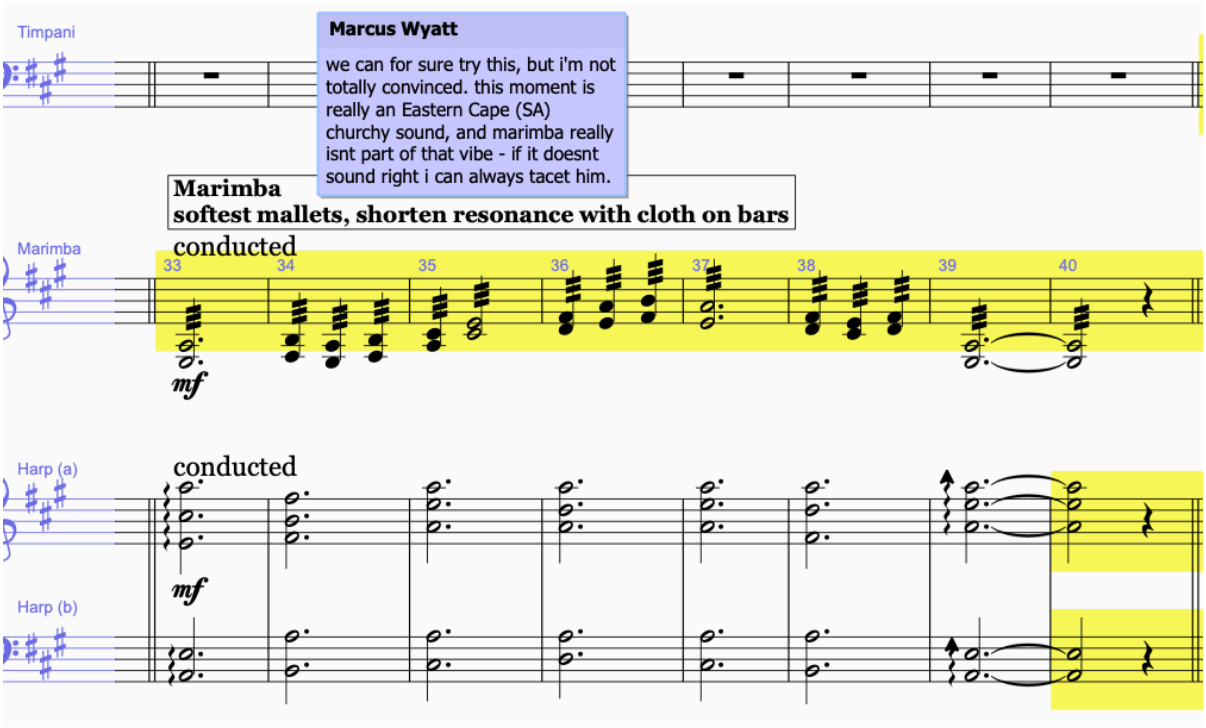


Figure 21 Dear Africa: Suggested marimba passage

Similarly, Pascarelli had proposed the use of flugelhorns in the melody, but being from this region of South Africa, I was aware that the trumpet, rather than the flugelhorn, was typically the preferred sound in many church bands and brass bands, due to both musical and practical considerations.

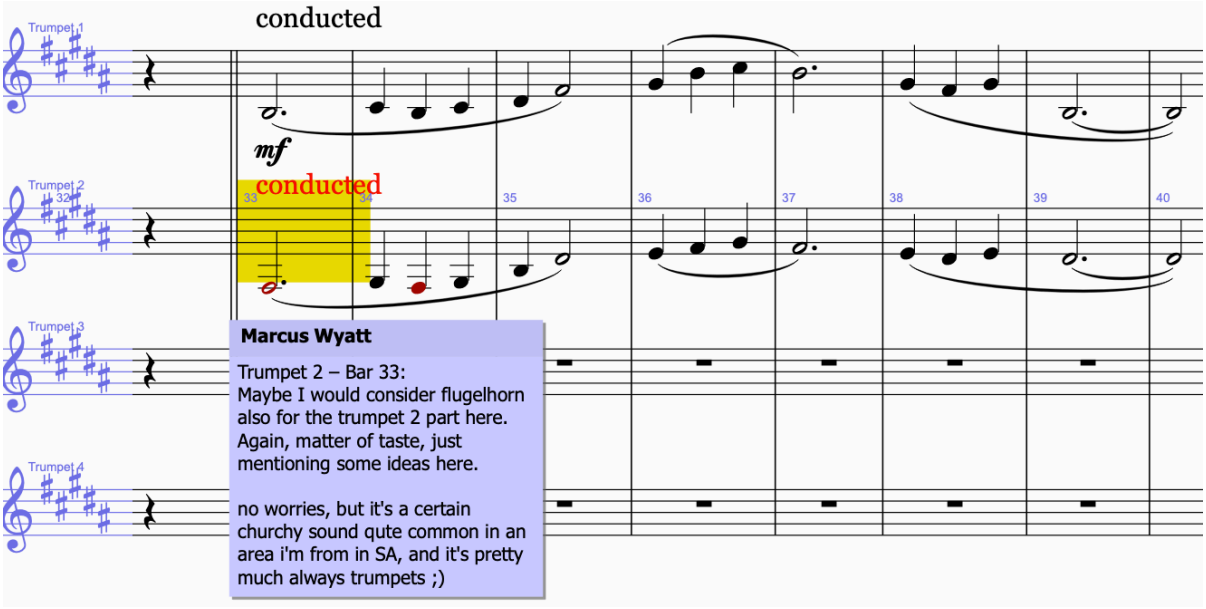


Figure 22 Dear Africa: Suggested flugelhorn passage

Pasacarelli made an alternative suggestion regarding the timpani part in the tag section, proposing that it should follow the chord changes instead of staying on the root. However, my intention was to create a sound reminiscent of church music, and the use of the A note as a pedal throughout the chord progression contributed to a more church-inspired atmosphere. Pedal points are indeed a common feature in South African jazz, serving to create a sense of stability and continuity, while also allowing for harmonic and melodic exploration. This technique is frequently used by South African jazz musicians to ground their improvisations and to establish a deeper connection with their audiences. Pedal points are also commonly employed in gospel music, which has exerted a strong influence on the development of South African jazz.

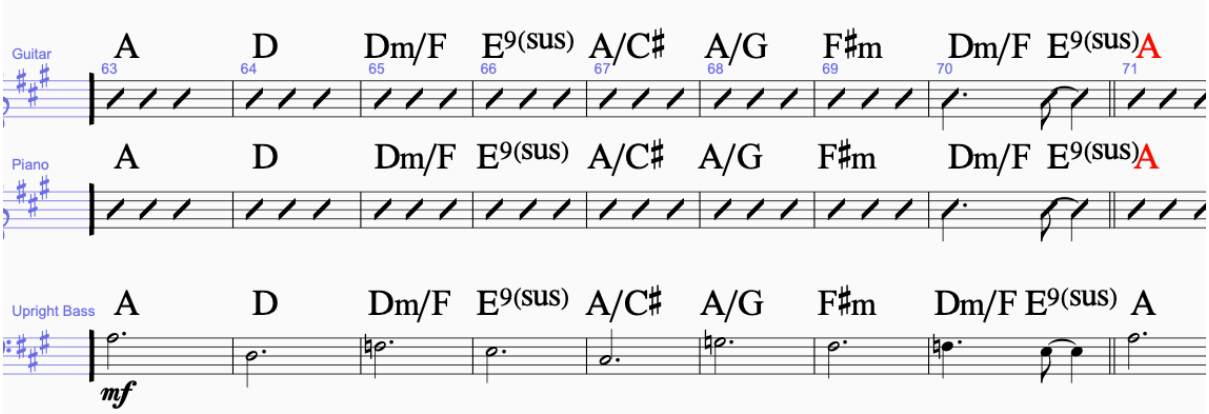


Figure 23A Dear Africa: Chord Progession under the timpani passage

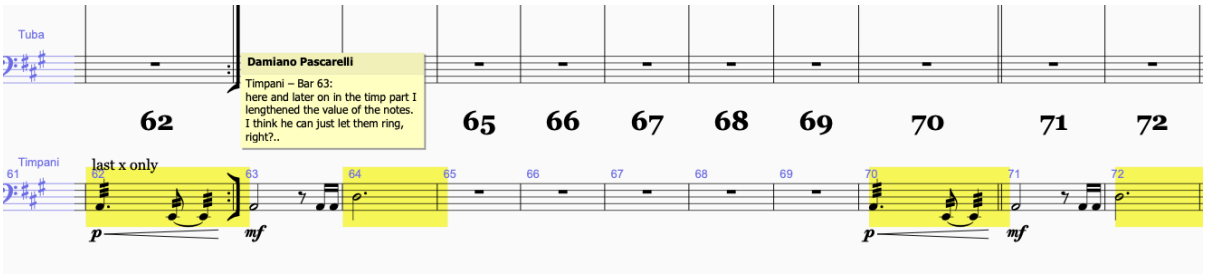


Figure 23B Dear Africa: Pascarelli's suggested timpani passage

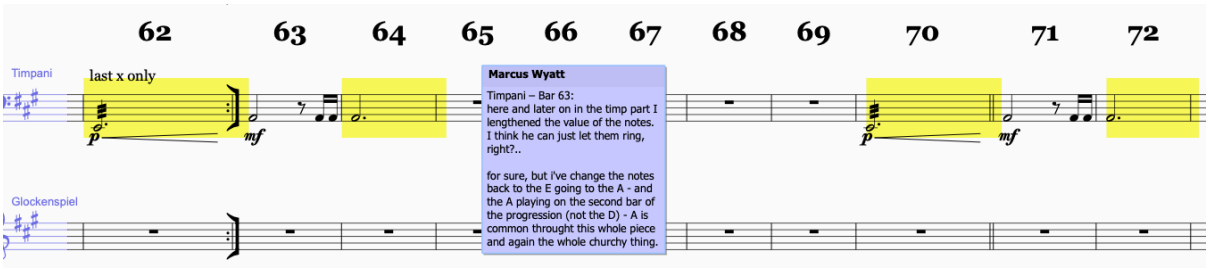


Figure 23C Dear Africa: Original timpani passage

The issue of parts crossing was brought up multiple times, and it appeared to be a source of frustration for Pascarelli. While I do not assume that all European arrangers adhere to this rule of arranging, it does suggest a more conventional approach.

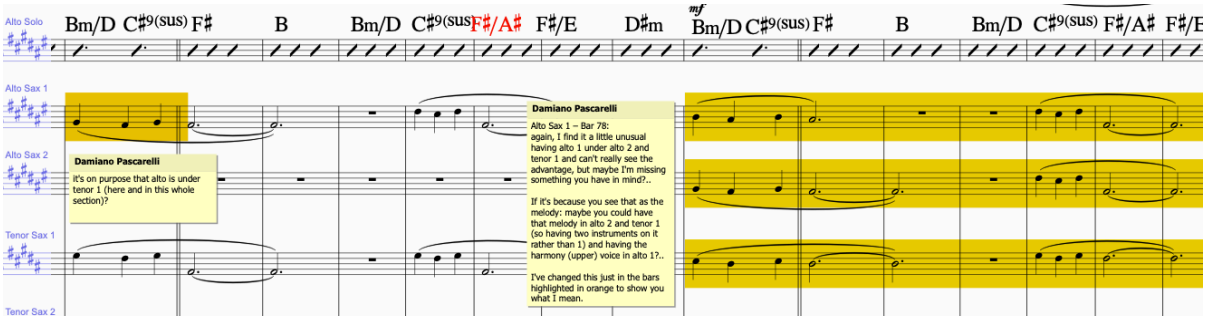


Figure 24 Dear Africa: Parts crossing dialogue

In considering the subject of parts crossing in the arrangement process, it is useful to examine it from a South African perspective. One notable source of inspiration for my own work as a composer and arranger has been the innovative approach of pianist Chris McGregor. I have

noted through personal study of his works, that McGregor, much like the legendary American composer Duke Ellington, wrote with a focus on the individual players and their instruments rather than solely on the instruments themselves. This approach allowed for a great deal of character and musicality to emerge in his compositions, resulting in a more organic and musically expressive effect. McGregor's approach to composition prioritized individual expression and interpretation over strict adherence to traditional instrumental roles and hierarchical structures. This philosophy has had a notable influence on many South African jazz musicians who prioritize finding a melodic solution for their own part, rather than being constrained by concerns over the relative position of their part to that of others within the same section. Such a flexible approach to arranging allows for greater musical expression and organic cohesion within the ensemble, reflecting McGregor's emphasis on the individual voice within the collective whole. Of course the hierarchy of parts corresponding with the hierarchy of players is important in many larger ensembles, as can be traditionally observed. But there appears to me a more modern trend of assigning lead lines or solos to (for example) the fourth trumpet player, who would, in a more traditional setting be assigned the lowest or easiest parts in a section. I was initially exposed to this approach during a rehearsal and performance process with the renowned American composer and arranger, Maria Schneider. Her music embodies a contemporary approach that challenges traditional hierarchies within ensembles and encourages a more egalitarian approach to individual musicians' roles. The experience of working with Schneider greatly influenced my own approach to composing and arranging, particularly with regard to prioritizing individual musical expression and creativity.

It is possible to argue that the approach of allowing all musicians in a section to take the lead responsibility, regardless of the crossing of parts, can be viewed as a more community-based approach to parts and the musicians who play them. This approach highlights the individuality and strengths of each musician, promoting a sense of collaboration and shared ownership of the music. It also encourages a more democratic approach to arranging and performance, which may resonate with the cultural and social values of certain musical communities. When considering the issue of parts crossing in the arrangement process, I contend that the arranger must therefore weigh the benefits of allowing for individual expression and character against the potential drawbacks of a conventional or traditional approach.

Findings

During the course of this project, it became evident that there are many similarities between South African jazz and American jazz, and to a lesser degree to European jazz. It also became clear that many of the techniques that were employed during the creation of the arrangements for the South African Songbook performance would have remained consistent had the repertoire been developed by a non-South African musician. However, it was also evident that despite the similarities between a South African approach and a more Western approach, the notable differences in approach are significant in preserving the authenticity of the music. Although the I-IV-V chord progression can be found in music worldwide, the distinctive South African sound is attributed to the approach to chord V and the chord voicings. These simple techniques could help distinguish the difference between a basic melody sounding like marabi, or like rock and roll.

Furthermore, the music preparation process highlighted that instrumentation and how it is approached is also an important aspect that distinguishes the South African sound. Musicians outside of South Africa often seem to have a different idea of the sound of the country and may be inclined to categorize all African music into a homogenous sound, possibly influenced by stereotypical film or documentary music.

This project also highlights the significance of the element of groove and the approach of rhythm sections to capture the authenticity of South African jazz. While swing has become a global musical style, ghoema, marabi, and mbaqanga have not yet disseminated widely and cannot be easily replicated based on a few listening sessions. This aspect became particularly apparent in the European rhythm section's approach to Yakhal' Nkomo, where they tended to interpret the 12/8 groove from a more Latin-American than African perspective. This was something that required some attention and discussion in the rehearsal process. In addition, given that the authentic translation of South African jazz depends heavily on these specific grooves, it was important to consider this aspect when selecting songs for arrangement by a non-South African big band and jazz orchestra. It was an important consideration that the representation of any particular country’s music, as performed by musicians from outside of that country will have it’s limitations, and in my view, the optimum way to present South African jazz is to have it performed by South African musicians.

The presentation of South African jazz beyond its borders also presents a linguistic challenge, as many of the African languages used in the songs are unique to the continent or

the country. Unlike American standards, it is not always possible to find a vocalist who can sing these songs in the vernacular, making it difficult to retain the authenticity of the music. The performance of Qongqothwane (The Click Song) during the project provides an illustrative example. With only Siyabonga Mthembu as the other vocalist on stage, the song required a strong female voice, leading to the inclusion of Eska, who is essentially English and does not speak isiXhosa. As a result, she had to learn the lyrics phonetically, which she accomplished with commendable proficiency. However, the unique clicking sounds for which Miriam Makeba was famous require extensive practice to master and cannot be learned in a few months. This kind of problem could potentially lead to the omission of songs with isiXhosa or isiZulu lyrics when presenting a South African Songbook in a country where no one is available or able to sing these songs, thereby excluding important works from the collection.

In South Africa, in my professional experience, there are often different camps within the jazz scene: those who prefer the straight ahead (or sometimes smooth) approach and sound, and those who prefer the much more fragmented, ‘open’ sound and approach of the free jazz and avant-garde school. It is not often (at least in my own experience) that one meets musicians who like to engage with both of these worlds. Chris McGregor seemed to me to be one such musician, and what I admire about his approach is the equal attention he gives to ensemble writing, and to the soloists and collective improvisation (which in the case of the Blue Notes and Brotherhood of Breath, tended towards a very free sound). Since discovering his music, he has continued to inspire my own approach, and the version of Lakutshon’ ilanga created for this performance, in addition to Louis Moholo’s obvious influence, also draws significantly on this inspiration

Something that became increasingly evident through the music preparation and arranging dialogue with Pascarelli was that rhythmic feel, or groove is central to South African jazz. In order to preserve and highlight melody and groove, it was important that the orchestration avoid too much ornamentation, or upper register lines that would distract from these.

It was important that the songs retain their character and apparent simplicity, and that they should not be over-arranged with too many counter melodies, or other distracting ornamentation devices. In my own estimation, simplicity in music is often overlooked in favour of complexity and virtuosity, whether in the approach to playing, or to arranging, orchestration or composing. Many of the South African songs that have helped to put this

country on the global map have been quite ‘simple’, but with exceptionally strong melodies, rooted chord progressions and strong groove aspects. The challenge throughout this process was to try to remain true to the spirit or essence of what made these iconic songs so appealing in the first place. The less-is-more approach to orchestration seemed appropriate in honouring some of these South African classics.

Conclusion

The South African Jazz Songbook project successfully achieved its objectives of presenting South African compositions in an authentic and meaningful manner, although performed by a primarily European jazz orchestra with only two South Africans on stage. The collaboration between the South African arrangers and the Metropole's Damiano Pascarelli was a key factor in the success of the project, resulting in orchestrations that served as excellent vehicles for each song. The close attention and scrutiny required by the project provided valuable insights into writing for large ensembles and the devices required to achieve an authentic South African sound. Moreover, the project provided an opportunity to learn from Pascarelli's perspective as a non-South African musician, highlighting the impact of different perspectives on the music.

In addition, the South African Jazz Songbook project was a success in terms of presenting and promoting South African jazz to a wider audience. The BBC Proms is recorded live and simultaneously broadcast around the world on BBC Radio, thus exposing audiences in many different countries to this music. This is a truly global reach, and helps to further the influence of South Africa’s unique jazz story. The live recording and simultaneous broadcast on BBC Radio meant that even those who were not able to attend the concert in person were still able to experience and appreciate the music. This exposure can help to create new fans and followers of South African jazz, and further elevate the status of the genre on the global stage. It's also worth noting that the BBC Proms is a highly prestigious event in the world of classical and contemporary music, which further adds to the significance of the South African Jazz Songbook being featured there.

Through careful attention to detail, authentic arrangements, and meaningful collaborations, the project was able to convey the richness and complexity of this unique jazz subgenre to audiences who may have been unfamiliar with it. The project also provided valuable insights into the challenges and opportunities of cross-cultural collaboration in music, and the importance of understanding the historical, cultural, and stylistic contexts that shape music. By shining a light on the legacy and contributions of South African jazz composers and activists, the project also helped to preserve and promote this important cultural heritage for future generations.

Reference List

Marabi – Basler Afrika Bibliographien. Available: https://www.baslerafrika.ch/contents/marabi/ [Apr 9, 2023].

Agawu, V.K. 2003. *Representing African music : postcolonial notes, queries, positions.* New York: Routledge. Available: .

Allen, L. 1993. *Pennywhistle kwela : a musical, historical and socio-political analysis.*

Allen, L. 1996. "Drumbeats, Pennywhistles and All That Jazz": The Relationship between Urban South African Musical Styles and Musical Meaning. *African Music.* 7(3):52-59. Available: http://www.jstor.org.ezproxy.uct.ac.za/stable/30250060.

Allen, L. 2002. Seeking The Significance Of Two 'Classic' South African Jazz Standards: Sound, Body, Response. *English Studies in Africa.* 45(2):91-108. Available: https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/00138390208691317.

Allen, L., Baines, G., Byerly, I., Cockburn, C., Coplan, D., Jules-Rosette, B., Drewett, M., Gilbert, S. et al. 2018. *Composing Apartheid: Music for and against apartheid.*

Allen, L. & Coplan, D. 1996. South African Jazz and Exile . *Journal of the International Library of African Music.* 7(3):1-15.

Ansell, G. 2005. *Soweto Blues: Jazz, Popular Music, and Politics in South Africa.* New York, USA: The Continuum Publishing Group.

Ballantine, C. 2012. *Marabi nights : jazz, 'race' and society in early apartheid South Africa.* Scottsville, South Africa: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press.

Ballantine, C. 1989. A brief history of South African popular music. *Popular Music.* 8(3):305-310. Available: https://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S0261143000003597.

Bethlehem, L. 2017. "Miriam's Place": South African jazz, conviviality and exile. *Social Dynamics.* 43(2):243-258. Available: https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/02533952.2017.1364464.

Blake, M. 2005. The Present-Day Composer Refuses to Budge: Case Studies in New South African Orchestral Music. *South African Music Studies : SAMUS.* 25:127-144.

Carr, I. 1973. *Music outside.* London: Latimer New Dimensions. Available: .

Chikowero, M. 2015. *African music, power, and being in colonial Zimbabwe.* Bloomington ;: Indiana University Press. Available: .

Coplan, D. . 2008. Popular Music in South Africa. In *The Garland Handbook of African Music.* Routledge. 426-448. Available: https://www.taylorfrancis.com/books/9780203927878/chapters/10.4324/9780203927878-44.

Coplan, David B. (David Bellin). 1994. *In the time of cannibals : the word music of South Africa's Basotho migrants.* Chicago ;: London. Available: .

Coplan, David B. (David Bellin). 2007. *In township tonight! : three centuries of South African black city music and theatre.* 2nd ed. Auckland Park, South Africa: Jacana Media. Available: .

Dalamba, L. 2019. The Blue Notes: South African jazz and the limits of avant-garde solidarities in late 1960s London. *Safundi (Nashville, Tenn.).* 20(2):213-238. Available: https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/17533171.2019.1576955.

Davidson, K. 2012. Stylistic traits of South African jazz Barney Rachabane : a case study. *South African Music Studies : SAMUS.* 32(1):21-35. Available: http://hdl.handle.net/10520/EJC133357.

Eato, J. 2012. Tradition, Modernity, and Cultural Identity in Contemporary South Africa: the music of Tete Mbambisa, Louis Moholo-Moholo and Zim Ngqawana. 135.

Eribo, O., Ume, C., Saleh-Hanna, V., Nagel, M., Agozino, B., Elechi, O.O., Agomoh, U., Sudbury, J. et al. 2008. *Colonial Systems of Control : Criminal Justice in Nigeria.* Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press / Les Presses de l'Universite d'Ottawa. DOI:10.2307/j.ctt1ckph37. Available: .

Feld, S. 1988. Notes on World Beat. *Public Culture.* 1(1):31-37.

Franke, V.M. 2012. South African Orchestral Music: Five Exponents. *Acta Musicologica.* 84(1):87-125.

Gwangwa, J. 1993. *Flowers of the Nation.* South Africa: Tusk Music.

Harrison, M. 2001. *Symphonic jazz.* Available: https://www-oxfordmusiconline-com.ezproxy.uct.ac.za/grovemusic/display/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000027249 [Mar 29, 2023].

Johannes, S. 2010. *Bassists of iKapa (the Cape) : a brief analysis of the development of the bass guitar in the musical genres of Mbaqanga and Ghoema in Cape Town, South Africa with a focus on the biographies and techniques of two of Cape Town's most prolific bassists, Spencer Mbadu and Gary Kriel.* Available: http://hdl.handle.net/11427/14739 .

Knight, J. 2010. Sing on, Ntsikana: The Story of Christian Music Among the Xhosa people of South Africa. *Musical Offerings.* 1(1):21-31.

Lilley, A. 2020. *The Musical Artistry of Bheki Mseleku.* Oxford: African Minds. Available: https://www.perlego.com/book/1976810/the-musical-artistry-of-bheki-mseleku-pdf.

Makeba, M. 1971. *The world of African song.* Available: https://search.proquest.com/docview/38252867.

Makhathini, N. 2021. Jazz in Postcolonial South Africa: Tracing the Politics of "Formal" and "Informal". *Jazz and Culture (Champaign, Ill.).* 4(1):1-32. Available: https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5406/jazzculture.4.1.0001.

Martin, D. 2013. *Sounding the Cape : Music, Identity and Politics in South Africa.* Cape Town: African Minds. Available: .

Masekela, H. 1967. *Hugh Masekela is Alive and Well at the Whiskey.* Los Angeles, USA: Uni Records.

Masekela, H. 1994. *Hope.* South Africa: RiSA.

Merz, C.L. 2016. Tracing the Development of the South African Alto Saxophone Style. *World of Music.* 5(2):31-46.

Monson, I. 1996. *Saying something : jazz improvisation and interaction.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Available: http://hdl.handle.net/2027/heb.05611.

Muller, C. 2001. Capturing the "Spirit of Africa" in the Jazz Singing of South African-Born Sathima Bea Benjamin. *Research in African Literatures; Research in African Literatures.* 32(2):133-152.

Nestico, S. 1993. *The complete arranger.* Delevan, N.Y: Kendor Music. Available: .

Nketia, J.H.K. 1974. *The music of Africa.* New York: W.W. Norton. Available: .

Nkosi, L. 1966. Jazz in Exile. *Transition (Kampala, Uganda).* (24):34-37.

Onyebadi, U. 2017. Bob Marley: Communicating Africa's political liberation and unity through reggae music. *International Communication Research Journal.* 52(1):56.

Regis, H.A. 1999. Second Lines, Minstrelsy, and the Contested Landscapes of New Orleans Afro-Creole Festivals. *Cultural Anthropology.* 14(4):472-504.

Reich, H. 2020. *Pianist Abdullah Ibrahim reflects on life before and after apartheid, and how Duke Ellington and Thelonius Monk helped shape his career.* Available: https://www.chicagotribune.com/entertainment/music/howard-reich/ct-ott-abdullah-ibrahim-reich-0228-20200227-v5rfqjgnjneltfaz5cnq7vnwdm-story.html [Apr 1, 2023].

Russonello, G. 2020. Making Their Own Jazz History: Correction. *The New York Times.*

Shoemaker, B. 2023. Page One. *Https://Www.Pointofdeparture.Org/Content.Html.* (82) Available: https://www.pointofdeparture.org/Content.html [29 March 2023].

Sussman, R. & Abene, M. 2012. *Jazz composition and arranging in the digital age.* New York: Oxford University Press. Available: .

Szymczak, C. 2007. Jonas Gwangwa: musician and cultural activist. *South African Music Studies : SAMUS.* :47.

Versola, A. 2018. *Jazz & Apartheid: An Analysis of The Life and Music of Hugh Masekela.* Available: https://search.proquest.com/docview/2058031258 .

Washington, S. 2012. Exiles / inxiles : differing axes of South African jazz during late Apartheid. *South African Music Studies : SAMUS.* 32(1):91-111. Available: http://hdl.handle.net/10520/EJC133353.

Appendix A: Reviews

LONDON JAZZNEWS

FRIDAY 7 APRIL 2023 |

LIVE REVIEW

Prom 56: The South African Jazz Songbook (Metropole Orkest/ Marcus Wyatt)

ON 29 AUGUST 2022 • (2 COMMENTS)

Prom 56: The South African Jazz Songbook (Metropole Orkest/ Marcus Wyatt)

(Royal Albert Hall, 28 August 2022. Review by Sebastian Scotney)

Prom 56. Photo credit: Mark Allan

There is an abiding truth about South African jazz, and it is perhaps best expressed in the title of a song by Mongezi Feza: "You Ain't Gonna Know Me 'Cos You Think You Know Me". The fact is that the more one learns about this music, the more there always is to explore below the surface. The jazz music of the Rainbow Nation never ceases to amaze with how deep, how rich, how varied, how incredibly diverse it is.

Marcus Wyatt's programme, devised for the **Metropole Orkest**, and being performed for the first time last night with the full orchestra (full band and set lists below), gave us just a brief glimpse into this vast

world.

Yes, there are the figures who have made it into the broader public consciousness. So we heard Miriam Makeba's "Click Song" performed characterfully, delightfully by **ESKA**, and also a tune, "Bombella", by Abdullah Ibrahim. Hugh Masekela's impassioned "Stimela" was there too, giving voice to the millions of men who went back and forth, travelling for days in cramped trains from the homelands and bordering nations to their work in the cities, with the haunting sounds of the wheels and the whistles of the train, and given an impassioned performance by **Siyabonga Mthembu** and ESKA.

A moment enjoyed with Siyabonga Mthembu and ESKA. Photo credit: Mark Allan/BBC

The clever aspect of the programme, however, was how we started to get to know the music of those figures whose fate always seems to be to remain below the radar, the "musicians' musicians". There was a gloriously lyrical piece, "The Age of Inner Knowing" from a total genius, Bheki Mseleku (1955-2008). And we also heard music by trombonist Jonas Gwangwa (1937-2021), the composer of the music of "Cry Freedom". He was remembered in "Diphororo", a great trombone feature for the superb **Robinson Khoury**. And then there are the Blue Notes, whose influence on jazz has been immeasurable. Loose Tubes would not have been the same band without the likes of Django Bates and Chris Batchelor having been magnetised by Dudu Pukwana as teenagers. A composition by him began the programme.

This concert has a very long backstory, and was the culmination of decades of persistent advocacy by Marcus Wyatt. Wyatt runs influential bands in South Africa, and is probably the leading bringer-together of South African jazz, combining a knowledge of the heritage with an active participation in the current scene. The story is that he spent a year in Amsterdam in 2001, which sowed the seeds for his building a network in the Dutch music community, notably through Durban-born saxophonist Sean Bergin who had fled South Africa and settled in Amsterdam in the 1970s. So, to arrive on the stage of the Royal Albert Hall last night with the Metropole Orkest was an immense achievement in itself, to which one has to add Wyatt's contribution as composer and lead arranger, and on top of those, his roles on the night as conductor and compere of a highly complex programme. He deserves all the praise he can get. I did start to wish we could have heard and seen more South Africans on stage to reflect the scene out there as it is. In the end,

partly to do with visa problems (apparently) there were only two of them (Wyatt and Mthembu) on the Albert Hall stage.

That said, the Metropole Orkest bringing this music onto a big stage and a big canvas brings its own delights. The unanimity of those strings who have put in their thousands of hours working in the same section together, the way they groove so effortlessly, is an experience in itself. And the guest soloists all made great contributions. **Theon Cross**'s highlight was an exploration of voiced multiphonics near the end. **Soweto Kinch** has many roles, it was good to be reminded what an imaginative and fluent jazz saxophonist he is.

It was also fascinating to watch the physical effect of the music on the audience in a well-filled arena, as the people bobbed, swayed and danced. A special occasion.

LINK: Prom 56 will be available online for a year (https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/m001bcrz)

L:R Siyabonga Mthembu, Marcus Wyatt, ESKA, Theon Cross, Soweto Kinch. Photo credit: Mark Allan/BBC

SET LISTS – FIRST SET

1A. Tete & Barbs in my Mind (Dudu Pukwana) – arr/orch Marcus Wyatt (feat. Siyabonga Mthembu)
1B. Mra (Christopher Columbus/Dudu Pukwana) – arr Chris McGregor/Marcus Wyatt orch Marcus Wyatt (solos : Trombone – Robinson Khoury, Piano – Hans Vroomans)

2. Angel Nemali (Dudu Pukwana) – arr Marcus Wyatt (orch ?)

(solos : Alto – Soweto Kinch, Guitar – Peter Tiehuis) intro and outro solo – Rik Mol (trumpet)

3. Bombella (Abdullah Ibrahim) – arr/orch Mike Campbell

(solos : Piano – Hans Vroomans, Tenor – Leo Janssen, Guitar – Peter Tiehuis)

4. The Click Song (Qongqothwane) (Miriam Makeba) arr/orch Marcus Wyatt

Feat. Eska – vocals, Theon Cross p tuba

5. Age of Inner Knowing (Bheki Mseleku) – arr Afrika Mkhize (Orch Vise Mkizwana or Mike Campbell)

(solos : Piano – Hans Vroomans, Tenor – Sjoerd Dijkhuizen)

6. Lakutshoni Ilanga (Mackay Davashe/Alan Salinga) – arr Louis Moholo/Marcus Wyatt orch Marcus Wyatt (feat Siyabonga Mthembu / ESKA; Theon Cross)

(solos : most of the band + harp & Theon Cross free solo!)

7. Bantu (Zim Ngqwana) – arr Marcus Wyatt / orch Mike Campbell (feat. Soweto Kinch)

(solos : Alto – Soweto Kinch, Piano – Hans Vroomans)

Feat. Theon Cross (in brass section)

Marcus Wyatt in the interval. Photo credit: Mark Allan/BBC

SECOND SET

8. Connected (comp/arr Marcus Wyatt (feat. ESKA)) Solos Hans Vroomans – piano

9. Stimela (Hugh Masekela) – arr/orch David Cousins (feat. Siyabonga Mthembu / ESKA)

10. Yakhal' Inkomo (Winston Mankunku) – arr Afrika Mkhize / orch Vise Mkizwana (solos : Tenor – Soweto Kinch, Drums – Marlon Witbooi , Trombone – Robinson Khoury, Trumpet – Nico Schepers)

11. Diphororo (Jonas Gwangwa) – arr Jonas Gwangwa/Marcus Wyatt / orch Melissa Van Der Spuy (feat Siyabonga Mthembu)

(solos : Trombone – Robinson Khoury; vocals – Siya Mthembu)

12. Annake Tassou (Marcus Wyatt) – arr Marcus Wyatt / orch Mike Campbell (feat. (feat Siyabonga Mthembu; ESKA & Theon Cross) (solos : Marlon Witbooi – Drums & Theon Cross tuba)

Encore : Dear Africa (Mongezi Feza/Johnny Dyani) – arr/orch Marcus Wyatt (intro double bass and tuba) (feat. all soloists)

(solos : Eska, Siyabonga, Soweto Kinch)

METROPOLE ORKEST AND GUESTS

First Violins: Jasper van Rosmalen (concert master), Federico Nathan, Sarah Koch, David Peijnenborgh, Gideon Nelissen, Jenneke Tesselaar, Marta Lemanska, Casper Donker, Saskia Frijns, Christina Knoll

Second Violins: Merel Jonker, Willem Kok, Ewa Zbyszynska, Ruben Margarita, Robert Baba, Xaquín Carro Cribeiro, Annerieke Nentjes

Violas: Norman Jansen, Mieke Honingh, Julia Jowett, Iris Schut, Isabella Petersen, Alex Welch

Cellos: Joel Siepmann, Emile Visser, Annie Tångberg, Jascha Albracht

Double Basses: Erik Winkelmann, Arend Liefkes, Rebecca Franssen

Harp: Joke Schonewille

Flutes: Mariël van den Bos, Janine Abbas

Oboe: Maxime Le Minter

Saxophones/Clarinets: Marc Scholten, Jasper van Damme, Leo Janssen, Sjoerd Dijkhuizen, Max Boeree

French horn: René Pagen

Trumpets: Ray Bruinsma (lead) , Martijn de Laat, Nico Schepers, Rik Mol

Trombones: Jel Jongen, Robinson Khoury, Jan Bastiani, Martin van den Berg (bass)

Percussion: Murk Jiskoot, Frank Wardenier

Drums: Toni Vitacolonna

Guitar: Peter Tiehuis

Bass: Eric van der Westen

Conductor: Marcus Wyatt*

Guests: Siyabonga Mthembu* (vocals), ESKA (vocals), Soweto Kinch* (saxophones) , Theon Cross* (tuba)

(*) Proms debut artist

Metropole orchestra conquers Royal Albert Hall again

31/08/2022 , News

Over the years, the Metropole Orkest has been a fixture at the BBC Proms. This year too, the Dutch orchestra received an

invitation and answered this request with a strong programme.

Text: Dick Hovenga | Photos: BBC Mark Allan

This time a full orchestral arrangement of The South African Jazz Songbook was chosen. The Metropole Big Band has previously toured the Netherlands with this. Also in London on August 28, the arrangements turned out to be a hit.

Trumpeter, arranger and conductor Marcus Wyatt is the man behind the Proms program. For this he delved deeply into South African jazz history. The varied program naturally included pieces by artists such as Hugh Masekela and Miriam Makeba. In addition, Wyatt introduced music by renowned composers who are less well known outside South Africa. The masterful arrangements of Wyatt and his South African friend/arranger Mike Campbell had swing and were played with heart and soul. With vocalist Siyabonga Mthembu from South Africa and the British Eska, Theon Cross and Soweto Kinch, the guest list was very diverse. As the concert progressed, it turned out to be an excellent choice.

BBC Proms: Metropole Orchestra, Theon Cross, Soweto Kinch

Newsletter

Sign up here for the monthly Jazzism newsletter

E-mail addı

TO ENROL

VIEW THE CONCERT AGENDA

Opening

The opening of the concert evening started with two pieces *Tete And Barbs In My Mind* and *Mra* by the legendary saxophonist Dudu Pukwana. Followed by Miriam Makeba's *The Click Song* , here sung by Eska and emphatically assisted by Theon Cross on tuba. A fantastic performance of Abdullah Ibrahim's *Bombella* and the wonderfully transverse *Lakutshoni Ilanga* (Mackay Davashe/Alan Salinga) were other highlights. Zim Ngqawana's *Bantu* closed the set before the break.

Siyabonga Mthembu with Eska and Theon Cross on tuba

After the break

There was probably something nice in the intermission drinks because after the break the musicians really got going. First there was the beautiful *Connected* , a composition by Marcus Wyatt that he 'stuck in'. Then the impressive *Stimela* (Hugh Masekela). A song that tells of black workers who traveled in overcrowded wagons from the countryside to the city where they often had to do hard work for days on end. Exuberantly sung by Mthembu in the role of narrator assisted by Eska. A breathtaking performance. The program continued with dazzling versions of

Yakhal' Inkomo by saxophonist Winston 'Mankunku' Ngozi and *Diphororo by musician and outspoken political activist Jonas Gwangwa.*

Metropole Orkest with in front from left to right: Siyabonga Mthembu, Marcus Wyatt, Eska, Theon Cross and Soweto Kinch

Valve

Wyatt's own *Annake Tassou* was introduced by Cross who, while 'talking singing' in his tuba, simultaneously lays down a wonderful bass line. In doing so, he shows his greatness, despite his young age. With Mthembu and Eska emphatically present, the concert ended very strongly. Rich composition, even richer arrangement.

With the audience in a full Royal Albert Hall in high spirits, an encore is naturally forced. Surprisingly, that is perhaps the most beautiful part of the evening. With all the performers on stage, *Dear Africa,*written by Mongezi Feza, Okay Temiz and Johnny Dyani, forged into a true hymn. For example, the Metropole once again showed what beautiful dimensions a swelling sound has. Eska and Mthembu set the tone for this performance and Cross follows suitably. It is saxophonist Soweto Kinch who carries the

composition with a very beautiful solo. In the most beautiful part of his solo you can hear the orchestra 'sliding under', as it rarely happens. Slowly in volume and oh so subtly build up to full power and carry through the emotion at the peak of the solo. Insanely beautiful!

Tribute

What a joy it is to listen to this orchestra. There is simply no other orchestra in the world that can switch between atmosphere and rhythm so easily. In addition, the individual musicians play great solos. It is not easy for a guest musician to match that quality, let alone surpass it. Sunday, August 28, 2022 will go down in the books as a special BBC Proms and a highlight in the existence of the Metropole Orkest. Tribute to Marcus Wyatt who has continued this project for years to see it finally flourish in the mecca of music country London's Royal Albert Hall.

Latest news

Soweto Kinch and Theon Cross fire up BBC Proms' South African Songbook

Noah Sparkes

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 2, 2022

The riches of the South African Songbook are given a lush but sometimes incongruous orchestral treatment at one of this year's 'Jazz Proms'

Theon Cross and Soweto Kinch with the Metropole Orkest - Photo by Mark Allan

The **Metropole Orkest**'s recent performance of classic South African jazz provokes some interesting questions about setting, format, and the knotty dynamics of reinterpretation. Hosted at the Royal Albert Hall as part of the **BBC Proms**, the arrangement and orchestration - for the most part by South African composer **Marcus Wyatt** - is fitting considering the historically classical emphasis of the Proms but no less surprising given the nature of the original recordings. Where at the performance we have an orchestra of 54 musicians (including a 27- piece string section), the music featured here was first performed and recorded by small jazz ensembles. The compositions, written by the likes of Dudu Pukwana, Hugh Masekela, Winston 'Mankunku' Ngozi, and Bheki Mseleku, were notable for their integration of distinctly South African stylings within a structure established by the American jazz band of the 1950s and 60s.

Though these musicians would forge their own distinct styles and would even introduce the more expansive harmonic structures of the African choral tradition, they never completely eschewed the intimacy, immediacy, and rawness that is afforded by a small group of players. Nonetheless, this is not to say there is no precedent for the adaptation of these works in an orchestral context. Indeed, just as South African artists looked to Coltrane and Bird, many would have grown up with the popular lexicon of the American big band. Duke Ellington's orchestra would have exerted a notable influence over the nascent South African jazz scene. So as this performance aptly demonstrates, there is in fact a structure within many of the original compositions that can be extracted and expanded to the orchestra setting. But what this ambitious treatment lends to these works is a more divisive matter.

This dichotomy appears from the start of the set and seems to grow throughout the first half. We begin with Dudu Pukwana's 'Tete and Barbs in my Mind'. Over bubbling drums, cascading harps, and grand string and horn arrangements, the magnificent **Siyabonga Mthembu** beautifully illuminates the music's rebellious, anti-apartheid subtext. It's a slightly mournful opener that swiftly erupts into the propulsive, joyous tone of another Dudu Pukwana track, 'Mra'. The third and final Pukwana track follows and is a terrific showcase for saxophonist **Soweto Kinch**'s magnificent soloing.

At this point, though the exploratory free-jazz influence of Pukwana has been largely - though not entirely - substituted for a more accessible style, there's nothing that could be considered too jarringly out of step with the spirit of the original recordings. Even if some of the raw, unadorned power of the originals is lost, the Metropole Orkest's performance is undeniably entertaining when channeling these classics through the orchestra's maximalist framework. It helps that the solos throughout are magnificent.

Moving on, the simple beauty of Bheki Mseleku's melody on 'The Age of Inner Knowing' breaks through any distance created by the grand ornamentation. Nonetheless, it's hard to avoid the conclusion that some of Mseleku's deftness of touch is lost when transposed into this context.

For some, the sweeping orchestration may even begin to resemble the lush, pristine orchestral scores of an old-Hollywood soundtrack. Though the arrangement and execution is brilliant - and incredibly entertaining - it can occasionally feel like a gentrified version of South Africa's rebellious, anti-establishment jazz idiom. Given the setting - with its suggestion of the 'highbrow' - this potential misgiving grows stronger.

This view is perhaps cynical and is complicated by the brilliant performance of the traditional South African ballad, 'Lakutshoni Ilanga'. As Wyatt explains, this rendition will be partly based on Louis Moholo's deconstructed free-jazz arrangement. Faithful to Moholo's vision, after a swooning intro, the song bursts into chaos. It's surprisingly uncompromising and a fitting ode to the unique free-jazz legacy of Moholo and his collaborators in the Blue Notes.

Following a jovial arrangement of Zim Ngqwana's beautiful 'Bantu', we arrive at the interval. For the most part, this first half can be assessed as a big-band interpretation of South Africa's jazz classics. Interestingly, Wyatt's arrangements - with their inclusion of the string section - are arguably closer to the jazz orchestra stylings of Paul Whiteman than of Duke Ellington. Given the terrific soloing, and bombastic energy of the players, it makes for a great listen.

The second half is equally curious, eschewing the bombastic big-band renditions of older classics and opting instead for more modern works by the likes of Hugh Masekela, Jonas Gwangwa, and conductor Marcus Wyatt himself.

After Wyatt's own composition, 'Connected', we move on to the work of Masekela. 'Stimela' is a pretty faithful rendition of Masekela's R'n'B-jazz composition marking a dramatic shift from the big-band tone of the first half. Here, the brilliant Siyabonga Mthembu appears again to deliver a highlight of the concert.

Continuing this delve into a more modern approach, we have an initially unrecognisable interpretation of Winston 'Mankunku' Ngozi's wonderful composition, 'Yakhal' Inkomo'. Here, the shift in style becomes more apparent. The Mankunku Quartet's original composition, with its casually uplifting tone and subtly swinging rhythm, has been substituted for something more complex and bombastic. Halfway through, the style shifts from an RnB-big-band merger to an explosive Latin-inflected interpretation. The arrangement by Afrika Mkhize is brilliant on its own terms but no less strange when compared to the original. The only thing that feels concretely derived from Ngozi's work is the magnificent soloing on the tenor by Soweto Kinch.

The following song, 'Diphororo' by Jonas Gwangwa, turns to a slow-jam RnB feel. A lyrical solo from trombonist **Robinson Khoury** is a welcome addition amidst the slightly Hollywood orchestration. We then have the penultimate piece, 'Annake Tassou', which returns to the danceable, joyful heart of so much South African township music. **Theon Cross**, known for his work with Sons of Kemet, reappears here with a terrific tuba solo.

The encore of the evening, the moving and sparse 'Dear Africa', is a beautiful closer and a powerful reminder of the legacy of the Blue Notes (it was written by members Mongezi Feza and Johnny Dyani). Here, Theon Cross lays the track's groundworks with a breath-defying opening solo.

All in all, the concert is a thought-provoking and entertaining showcase of the South African jazz scene. But the question remains about whether the format is suited to these wonderfully grounded and earthy compositions. Of course, any championing of this music is a positive, but one might ask what is lost in the maximalism and sheen of the orchestration. Does the orchestra's scale and string-kissed gloss erode some of the immediacy and rawness of the originals? Does the vast, glamorous setting impede the sense of individuality and instrumental focus that was so important on the first recordings?

On the other hand, certain things are effectively and sincerely communicated. There is a keen awareness of the dual purposes of South Africa's jazz; a sense that beneath the danceable, ebullient surface there is a rebellious political subtext. Additionally, the driving, infectious energy of the works is palpable and perhaps even expanded through the orchestra's mass of players.

Finally, in addition to Moholo's free-jazz on 'Lakutshoni Ilanga', the solos throughout by Siyabonga Mthembu, Soweto Kinch, ESKA, Theon Cross and others channel some of the spontaneity and wild abandon found on the originals.

So ultimately the concert doubles as both a worthwhile, powerful experience and a reminder of the unique and irreplaceable quality of the original works. All audience members and listeners should seek out the recordings of these pioneering jazz artists. They are entirely worthy of your time.

Appendix B: Photographs of the Performance

BBC PROMS 56 - SOUTH AFRICAN JAZZ SONGBOOK
IMAGE CREDIT BBC / MARK ALLAN

BBC PROMS 56 - SOUTH AFRICAN JAZZ SONGBOOK
IMAGE CREDIT BBC / MARK ALLAN

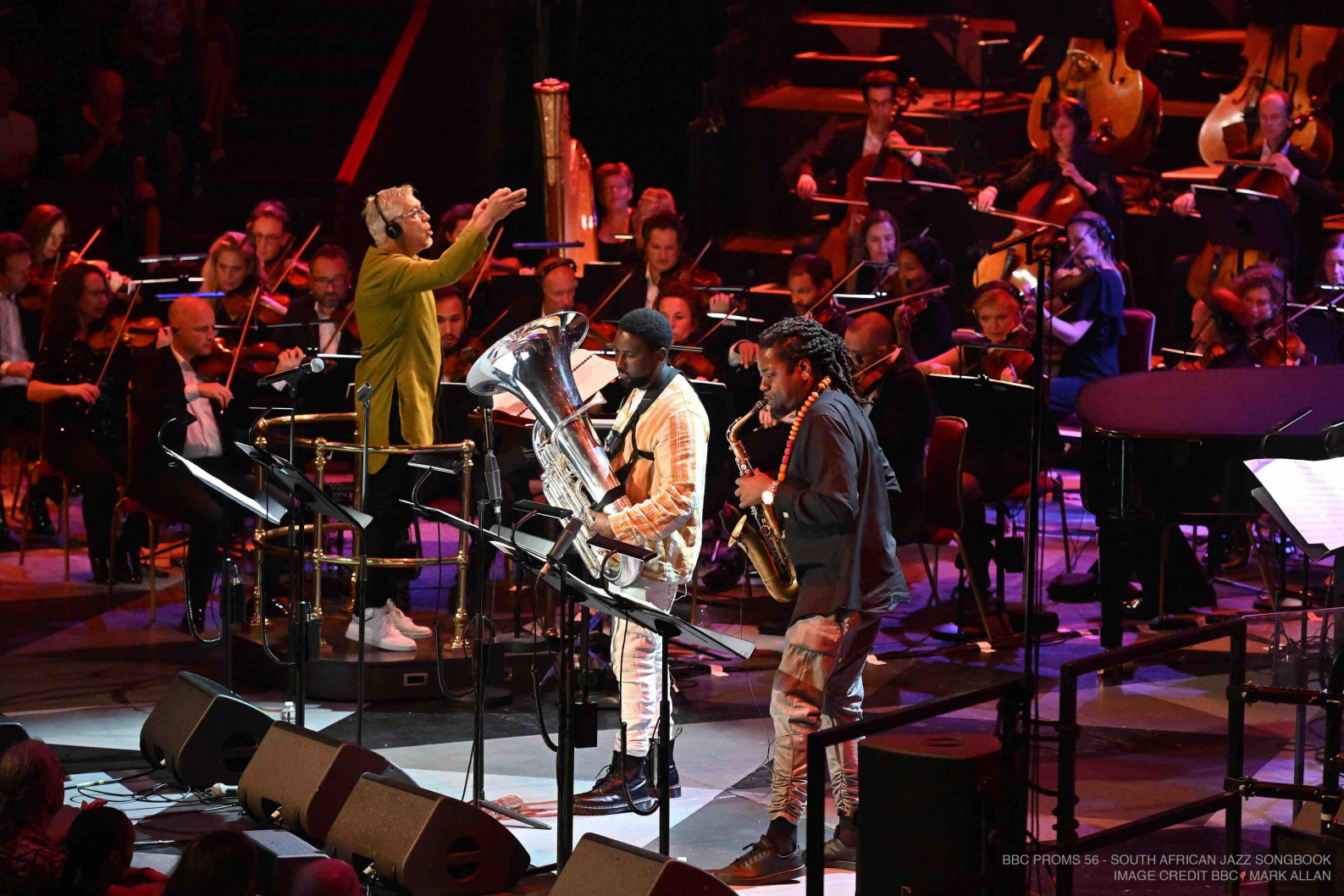
BBC PROMS 56 - SOUTH AFRICAN JAZZ SONGBOOK
IMAGE CREDIT BBC / MARK ALLAN


BBC PROMS 50 - SOUTH AFRICAN JAZZ SONGBOOK
IMAGE CREDIT: BBC / MARK ALLAN

BBC PROMS 56 - SOUTH AFRICAN JAZZ SONGBOOK
IMAGE CREDIT BBC / MARK ALLAN

BBC PROMS 56 - SOUTH AFRICAN JAZZ SONGBOOK
IMAGE CREDIT BBC / MARK ALLAN


BBC PROMS 56 - SOUTH AFRICAN JAZZ SONGBOOK
IMAGE CREDIT BBC / MARK ALLAN



BBC PROMS 56 - SOUTH AFRICAN JAZZ SONGBOOK
IMAGE CREDIT BBC / MARK ALLAN

BBC PROMS 56 - SOUTH AFRICAN JAZZ SONGBOOK
IMAGE CREDIT BBC / MARK ALLAN


BBC PROMS 56 - SOUTH AFRICAN JAZZ SONGBOOK
IMAGE CREDIT BBC / MARK ALLAN

BBC PROMS 56 - SOUTH AFRICAN JAZZ SONGBOOK
IMAGE CREDIT BBC / MARK ALLAN

BBC PROMS 56 - SOUTH AFRICAN JAZZ SONGBOOK
IMAGE CREDIT BBC / MARK ALLAN


BBC PROMS 56 - SOUTH AFRICAN JAZZ SONGBOOK
IMAGE CREDIT BBC / MARK

BBC PROMS 56 - SOUTH AFRICAN JAZZ SONGBOOK
IMAGE CREDIT BBC / MARK ALLAN


BBC PROMS 2024: SOUTH AFRICAN JAZZ SONGBOOK
IMAGE CREDIT: BBC/MARK ALLAN

Appendix C: Conductor's Scores

Click here to access the full conductor's scores.