

## Preface

In the first edition of *South African Music*, the Preface focused on what Africa and its music was not. Having taught about African music in both South Africa (the mid-1990s) and the United States (since then) it seemed like my project was to dispel stereotypes about the music of Africa that students often bring to the classroom. First, many talk about Africa as if it is a country like the United States, and not an entire continent with a complex history, and richly textured fabric of musical expression; second, we assume that African music is only about drumming and complex rhythms when it is about so much more; and third, Africa is conceptualized as a place without history—it exists largely as the site of a vague form of cultural memory for those who were sold into slavery and ended up living in other parts of the world, and it has no real presence in the minds of many in the contemporary world. The South African case study was set up to reinforce the fact that these three ideas about African music were completely wrong, and they certainly didn't fit the music of South Africa, the country at the southern most tip of the African continent.

In this revised edition of *South African Music* I reconfigure the framing of the book in ways I couldn't imagine doing in the first edition published by ABC-CLIO in 2004. While I did make some attempt to at least represent pieces of the African continent in the first edition's Preface and Appendices, as per the guidelines for the original book series, it is almost impossible to reduce a continent as large and diverse as Africa to bookends—which is what happened in the first edition.<sup>1</sup> I could more effectively talk about the impact of England and the United States on South African music and culture in the

twentieth century than I could talk about its relationship to the rest of the African continent because English and American influences overlapped with the narratives of colonization and encounters with northern hemisphere or “Western” cultural forms in other parts of Africa. These narratives traveled to South Africa with greater ease than the music, or knowledge about it, from the rest of Africa.

In the early 1990s, when I wrote the first drafts of this book, like many South Africans, I lacked a palpable feel for the southern African subcontinent, and the superficial continental generalizations about “African music” were clearly the outcomes of my having grown up White in apartheid South Africa. Born in the early 1960s, the era of Grand Apartheid, when the apartheid regime began to enforce the laws it had put in place in the 1950s, I had very little experience of the neighboring states—in fact the South African Defense Force effectively declared war on those states in the apartheid era (see Chapman 1996, Introduction). Certainly, with a South African passport travel into any significant part of the African continent was almost impossible. At that time, it was easier to get to Europe, Britain, or the United States than it was to travel to Kenya, Tanzania, or Nigeria.

It was not just the music of the larger continent that was hard to cover in a single volume, but in the post-apartheid era it seems it is just as much of a challenge to represent the complexity of South Africa’s twentieth-century musical past as a single narrative. While in the 1990s, South Africans were desperately seeking ways to articulate a sense of national unity, a decade later, we are possibly less concerned about defining the internal connections than about rearticulating the ties that bind us to the rest of the world. In response, I suggest in this revised edition that we learn about South African music through four frames—in terms of South Africa as a recently formed national entity, South Africa in the southern African region, on the African continent, and in the world at large. I have taken this position in this book because much has changed in regard to South Africa’s relationship to the rest of Africa and the world in the last decade; and because there is so much more music and writing about music from South Africa than there was even five years ago. In addition, as I explain later in the book, the Internet is radically changing the way we access acoustical and video images of music of the world’s peoples, and this is definitely the case with South African music. In other words, how we think about music in South Africa and elsewhere in the world will shift accordingly.

Having opened the discussion of South African music to literally a global perspective, I should underscore that it is absolutely impossible for a single author like myself to provide any kind of complete representation of the twentieth century in South African music. As the Series Editor, Michael Bakan, has suggested, comprehensive treatment of a country’s present and past in

music was never the intention. Rather, in this book, I make a small beginning by sharing the knowledge I have gained through my own research as a South African ethnomusicologist over the past twenty-five years. It is a perspective on South African music informed first by the fact that I was born in South Africa and lived there until ten years ago, and travel back regularly; but it is also a perspective that has been shaped by living at some distance from the place, by addressing the kinds of questions asked and concerns raised about South African music by those I have encountered in the United States.

Both because of the strong impact of American, British, and European music and culture in the shaping of contemporary South African practices, and because of my own diasporic existence, I am sure that as you study the materials in this book, you will find yourself making comparative observations. When you read about the ways in which “Coloured” South Africans absorbed American jazz and popular music, you no doubt will realize that this process might not be that different for many who grew up in post-World War II America or England. Conversely, you might be surprised at the ways in which African American gospel or the largely White contemporary Christian music has been absorbed into the Zulu-language religious ritual and song-practices amongst the followers of Shembe in KwaZulu Natal. Creating connections, discovering parallel practices, and inserting your own experience into this material on South African music is an important part of understanding the place and power of music in the contemporary world.

### **How This Book Is Organized**

The second edition is greatly revised from the first published with ABC-CLIO. My focus here is in the book’s use as a textbook for undergraduate world music students, those interested in the music of Africa, or first year graduate students in ethnomusicology. The book is divided into three parts, and each part is divided again into several chapters. There is a substantial body of newly written material. The overall shape of the book starts wide, with general contextual information, first on South Africa in relationship to the region and African continent, and then becomes increasingly focused. Each chapter ends with a set of keywords and definitions drawn from the chapter’s text that work as a kind of summary of core contents as well. At the end of the three large parts, readers are pointed to representative recordings related to each chapter, either in the endnotes or in the body of the text, which are available commercially as CDs and DVDs or through commercial media archives like iTunes. YouTube is equally valued as a site for video clips of music referenced in the book. References cited in individual

chapters in each part are listed at the end of each part. Visual images relevant to the discussions at hand are included throughout the volume. A CD of field recordings is inserted at the back of the book and discussed in the Appendices.

Part One: “Creating Connections” provides introductory materials for the study of South African music. Chapter 1 begins with a discussion of the globally popular, but South African originating song with three names: “Mbube”/“Wimoweh”/“The Lion Sleeps Tonight.” We use that song and its accompanying story to open up a conversation about key characteristics of South African music and culture, and to discuss the challenges we face in thinking about South African music as a single entity. Chapter 2 provides a discussion of the three phases of twentieth-century political history in South Africa: segregation, apartheid, and the post-apartheid periods. Chapter 3 is an overview of South African media history, with a particular focus on radio, the most widely used medium in South Africa today. Chapter 4 moves into a detailed discussion of *Graceland*, the album produced by American musician Paul Simon in collaboration with South African (and other world) musicians, a project frequently assumed to represent a turning point in South African music history.

Part Two: “Musical Migrations” moves to a more focused overview of significant musical styles in twentieth-century South Africa—particularly those known through world music circuits. Chapter 5 suggests ways in which we might create specific periods for stylistic development and transformations. Chapter 6 provides a series of snapshots of key musical styles. Chapters 7 through 9 are three more in-depth discussions of three different South African music-dance cultures that emerged with the migration of Black South Africans from rural to more urbanized places of employment in the twentieth century. Chapter 7 looks at *isicathamiya*, the music transmitted globally by Joseph Shabalala and Ladysmith Black Mambazo; Chapter 8 examines maskanda, a Zulu language music and dance style, focused largely on the guitar and extended into a “band format” with bass, drums, and rhythm guitar; and Chapter 9 zooms in on Gumbo dance.

Part Three: “Focusing In—Two Case Studies” takes the reader into the heart of two musical cultures that I have researched in greater depth than previous chapters. Chapters 10–12 examine South African jazz as it was created in the port city of Cape Town in the post-World War II era, amongst people called “Coloured” and to a lesser extent those called “Bantu/African.” It expands on the experiences of one individual, singer Sathima Bea Benjamin, and her musical cohorts. Chapters 13 and 14 take us up the Indian Ocean coastline of South Africa to Durban, another port city, and into the sacred world of the Zulu-language followers of Black prophet Isaiah Shembe who received a new style of song in dreams in the early twentieth

century. The chapter considers the musical style, words of the songs, and the transformations of style over the course of the twentieth century. Chapter 15 is an afterword that highlights key cultural themes embedded in the study of South African music.

There are five appendices in this book: Appendix 1 is a historical overview of outsider encounters with African Music; Appendix 2 provides an overview of South African history; Appendix 3 gives a useful list of commercially available recordings of South African music (which may be found on iTunes and other song lists for download), and website recommendations; Appendix 4 provides a general outline of themes in the study of African Music, and Appendix 5 is a discussion of the music examples on the accompanying CD. There is a glossary of South African terms and musical keywords; and finally a list of references cited. All South African-related music and video recordings cited in the text can be found listed in Appendix 3.

### **Acknowledgments**

This is a project that has been a long time in the making, and along the way, many people have participated in the conversations about South Africa, its politics, and its music. Some have done so in very general ways, others through quite specific gestures. Those who shaped the early contours were acknowledged in the first edition published by ABC-CLIO in 2004. In this edition, I would like to thank the graduate students who have passed through the Music Department at the University of Pennsylvania since 1998; my colleagues in the Department, Tim Rommen, Emily Dolan, Emma Dillon, Gary Tomlinson, Jeff Kallberg, and Guy Ramsey in particular; Margie and Maryellen, the ever helpful administrative staff; Associate Dean in the School of Arts and Sciences at Penn, Joe Farrell, who ensured I had the leave necessary to think through this text; Phil Bohlman for passing my name on to ABC-CLIO for the original series; Series Editor, Michael Bakan, for his tremendous enthusiasm and gentle prodding; the two anonymous reviewers of the revised edition, and Routledge editor, Constance Ditzel. I almost want to call her Constance Angel because she has been an editor out of this world. Also at Routledge, Denny Tek was enormously supportive in preparing the manuscript and CD; University of Pennsylvania graduate students Roger Grant compiled the index, and Gavin Steingo and Ian MacMillen created the Powerpoint notes for the accompanying website; and Charlotte Davies at The Running Head was a superb copy-editor.

Few books are written without the unfailing love and support of those close to an author. My parents asked regularly about the progress of the revisions; as did my friends in Yardley, PA; but most of all, I cherish the depth of

support and selfless giving that has come from Eric, Zachary, and Jasmine as I have sent them into the exile of theme parks, baseball games, and other amusement sites so that I had the time and space to meet the final deadlines. It is indeed to the three of you that I dedicate this volume with the deepest sense of love and appreciation for all you have become in my life.

### Note

- 1 Even those who label their works as pertaining to “Africa” or “African Music” inevitably create unevenly representative texts—from the *Garland Encyclopedia on World Music: Africa*, to Kofi Agawu’s *Representing African Music*. Whatever their real strengths, incomplete representation is certainly a limitation.